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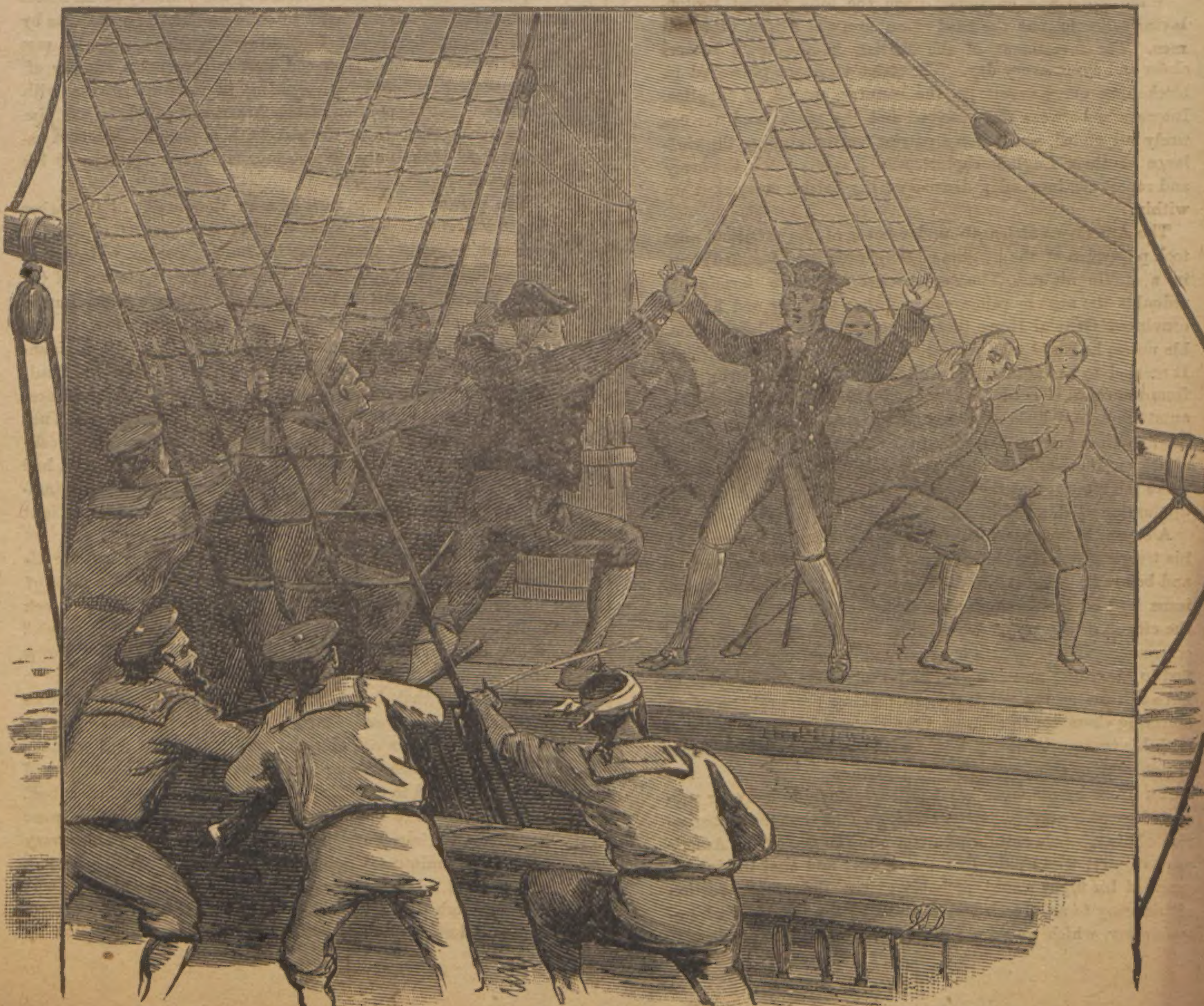
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## SONS OF LIBERTY;

Or, The Cruise for the Powder Ship.

By Professor J. H. Ingraham.



Daring capture of the powder ship by Neal Nelson, and his men.



# SONS OF LIBERTY;

—OR—

## THE CRUISE FOR THE POWDER SHIP

*A Story of Land and Sea in the War for  
Independence.*

BY PROF. J. H. INGRAHAM.

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.

It was early in the beginning of that memorable contest which dismembered "a powerful and splendid empire," and to which a brave people were driven by the oppressive measures of the British ministry, that the following story opens.

Resistance and revolt had taken the place of petitions and remonstrances; councils of advisement had been converted into councils of war; and men exchanged the halls of debate upon civil rights and political oppression for the tent and the battle field.

The colonies were in arms from Maine to Georgia.

A national congress had concentrated into its hand all the authority of government.

To reduce the colonies to obedience, England had sent over immense fleets and large armies.

Boston was in the possession of an English force consisting of nearly ten thousand men; there being besides in the city about fifteen hundred Tory families, whose presence and services were of advantage to the enemy in his operations.

Washington was encamped upon the hills around Boston, laying siege to it at the head of an army of fifteen thousand men. The investment of the British in the town became closer and closer every day. The strict vigilance preserved in blockading every avenue to the country, cut off all supplies. Intercourse between the besieged and the main land was entirely suspended, save when a patriot family, eluding the vigilance of their English captors, would safely reach the army and report the increasing distress of the British army shut up within.

The Americans at length under cover of darkness and mist took possession of the heights of Dorchester, and fortified them in a single night. The appearance of these formidable redoubts the next morning, commanding the city and harbor, convinced General Howe that his position was no longer tenable unless he could take possession of the menacing elevations. It seemed to be another Bunker Hill pouring down upon him from the south side of the city; and although he feared that an attempt to dislodge the daring Americans from the height might bring on another sanguinary battle like that of the attack on Bunker Hill nine months before, he determined to make the attack; but there was no alternative but the instant evacuation of the city.

A storm, however, rendered the embarkation and passage of his troops across the intervening space of water impossible and before he could safely proceed on the enterprise the Americans had so far strengthened their position and approached the city so near with fresh redoubts, on which they had mounted cannon, that he saw that he must soon capitulate unless he fled to his ships; and this step he perceived he should speedily have to take, as the patriots were making preparations of an alarming character to command the channel; when to pass out with his transports he felt would be hazardous in the extreme, if not impracticable.

A retreat by sea, open as it still was to him, however presented great obstacles. General Howe saw that the embarkation of his troops would bring upon him the fire of the American artillery, who would line the shores; and that the intelligence of his flight would probably expose the greater portion of his army to an attack and capture by the van of Washington's army, which would not fail to press upon his rear.

Under these difficulties Sir William Howe resolved to call a council of war. An hour or two after issuing this order, on the afternoon of the Sabbath, the fourteenth of March, he was standing upon a terrace in the garden of a mansion which he had made his head-quarters. It stood upon Beacon Street, near the site of the present State House, and commanded a view of the whole circuit round Boston. Upon an elevated terrace in the garden was an arbor, the favorite resort of the British General, who was accustomed to pass most of the day here with his telescope at his eye watching the shores of Roxbury, Cambridge and Charleston; but for the last few days, since the night of the fourth of March, when the redoubts were thrown up like the work of magic on the heights of Dorchester, his glass had mostly been directed towards those formidable looking eminences.

By the side of the English General stood a stout, bluff, full-faced man, about forty-eight years of age, in the full dress of a rear Admiral. The contrast between the appearance of Howe and this person was very striking. The figure of the other was tall and elegant, and although he had passed his fiftieth year, his air was singularly youthful and his costume graceful and gay.

Everything about him betrayed a close observance of the rules of taste in dress, even to the beautiful sword-knot of mingled gold and silken threads that dangled at the hilt of his sword. His hair, was nicely powdered and tied in a queue, his ruffles were richly laced both at the wrists and bosom; his waistcoat was of the fairest buff and embroidered with silver; his yellow topboots shone like gold and his steel spurs glistened with their elaborate polish. His air and address were easy and yet haughty; and with all his care in dress his military appearance was striking. He had served before in America, and had a distinguished reputation as a soldier as well as a skilful diplomatist, and had been selected by the ministry as the fittest man in England to command in chief the hostile operations by land against the revolted colonies. In disposition he was mild by nature, and possessed that indescribable suavity of manner that rendered him pleasing in intercourse even with his foes. Yet his opinion of the Americans as rebels led him to pursue against them the war with a perseverance that exhibited to them only the sterner military features of his character.

The person standing with him on the outside of the arbor was Admiral Shuldham in command of the squadron of ships of war and transports then lying in Boston harbor. He was a large, fleshy man, and might have sat for a picture of Sir John Falstaff, save that he wanted the knight's merry humor in his eye; and that the peculiar fiery complexion of his countenance was wanting in that oily smoothness of rubicundity which can come only from "good sack." Admiral Shuldham loved brandy rather than sack, and this gave a ruddiness to his face that seemed to invite tapping. His beard had not been shaven for a week, Sunday though it was, and his neckcloth had not been exchanged in the same time, and so it had got rolled and twisted under his fat chin, till, though originally white, it had now nearly the hue and appearance of a bight of rope.

His hair was without powder, and stood stiffly up all over his head. His forehead was as tanned and grained as a piece of old canvas, and he possessed a nose that had a ludicrous cock in it, which got him the sobriquet in the fleet of "Old Snub." When he looked at any object at a distance, he would throw back his head and shut the eyelids of his little gray eyes so close together that, but for a faint twinkle, just perceptible, he seemed to have closed them altogether. His dress was as slovenly as his person. His coat was shabby, and had probably never seen a brush in the four years and a half that he had worn it. It had lost a third of its buttons and half of a cuff. His breeches were slouching and loose at one knee; he wore long blue stockings, but so negligently secured that he had every two or three minutes to stoop with his hand and give them a pull upward. His shoes were worn brown for want of polish; and, although they had each a buckle, the settings were more than half lost. His shirt ruffles were stained filthy yellow by



tobacco juice, and his finger nails hideous with a permanent segment of black——! His head was surmounted by a naval chapeau, oily and weather-worn. In his hand he held a clumsy ship's spy-glass, covered with old leather—an instrument as strikingly contrasting the elegant silver mounted field telescope which General Howe had at his eye as the Admiral himself the military chieftain.

"It is very plain, Admiral," said Howe, after a close scrutiny of the Boston lines in the curve of the shore, where groups and parties of men were very busily engaged; "it is very clear that Washington has made up his mind to make Boston too warm for me. The rogues are raising a new redoubt there a half mile in advance of their last."

"Yes, yes, I see him, confound him," observed the Admiral directing his glass towards the Neck. "They mean to beat up until they come fairly alongside."

"I begin to fear the worst, Washington has shown himself a skillful soldier and a man by no means to be trifled with rebel as he is!"

"If you followed my opinion, Sir William," said the Admiral, you would once more embark your three thousand men and make a night descent upon the flat below the Dorchester heights! You could be aboard of them before they knew of your being within hail, and my life on it, you would get the best of it."

"I have not forgotten Bunker Hill. This would prove an equally disastrous affair."

"We lost in killed and wounded over a thousand men, the flower of the army."

"And we took possession of their redoubt driving the rebels from it, killing and wounding five hundred of them."

"Yet the victory was dearly purchased. Besides they would not have retreated if their ammunition had not failed. At Dorchester they will be better prepared. I am persuaded that an enterprise like that attempted against Bunker's Hill will here fail. The difficulties in the way of its accomplishment are very numerous and well nigh insurmountable!"

"If you say the word I will warp three of my frigates within point blank range and batter away at them till they are tired of the sport!"

"The tide would not serve you but three or four hours as the water is shoal, and you would probably be grounded before you could return. This course I have thought of and have questioned pilots touching the depth of water and condition of the tides, and I am satisfied that it is impossible to do any thing by such means!"

"You do not then seriously meditate evacuating the city—the only place of importance we hold—without making an effort to maintain it!"

"I see no alternative. I will be governed however by the decision of the council of war which I have called together to meet me this evening. A second 'victory,' as you are pleased to term it, like that of Bunker's Hill, would expose the interest of England in America to great danger."

"What danger could a successful battle bring to his majesty, I would like to learn? Are not we here to fight the infernal Yankees when and wherever we can?"

"True; but we must act with caution. We must not jeopardize our cause by rashness. Suppose, even, that I should embark to-night five thousand troops, (for a man less would not suffice,) and make a successful attack upon the heights of Dorchester, and the morning sun should shine upon the flag of Great Britain waving over its summit?"

"It would be a glorious achievement, that would crown with honor your command, Sir William, and place a coronet upon your brow."

"Success," pursued the British General, "success the most brilliant would be as disastrous as defeat. It would require half the army now in Boston to maintain the heights after we had seized them. How can I spare four thousand men out of but eight thousand and three hundred, which is all I have fit for duty."

"My sailors and marines! They are as good men as yours!"

"True, but these would not give me in all more than ten thousand effective troops. Of these, half would, as I have said, have to be detached to take the heights, and then maintain

them against Washington's army of fifteen thousand of the provincial militia that have of late, flocked to his standard. And if you give me your men, it will leave your ships exposed to a boat attack from the Americans, who are as alert as foxes and ready to avail themselves of every opportunity of assailing us. Besides holding the city I have, as you know, to guard the peninsula of Charleston, lest the Americans seize a second time upon Breed's Hill. How pray, my dear Admiral, shall I keep the heights of Dorchester, the town of Boston and the peninsula of Charlestown, when my present force is hardly sufficient to 'op this place? No, I can't spare a man!"

"But I tell you, General," said the Admiral warmly, as he constantly paced up and down the path before the arbor as if walking his quarter deck, "I tell you the attack ought to be made! A battle is necessary to save the reputation of his majesty's arms! The rebels are beginning to laugh at us and to scorn us for our long inaction. They even openly twit us with your being afraid to risk your men out of Boston since the Bunker Hill affair!"

"A victory might be desirable to save the credit of the royal arms, but we are not sure of a victory. Nor even would a victory decide affairs in the Province. It would be risking everything to attempt the enterprise. If a reinforcement of five thousand men should enter the harbor to-night in less than twelve hours I would possess myself of yonder thronged heights or lay my body in its trenches. As it is the advantages cannot compensate the danger. But we will have the whole affair discussed in Council. If a majority of the twenty-one officers who shall there meet me, decide in favor of an attempt to dislodge the Americans, I shall not gainsay it; but when they shall have heard all I have to say, I am satisfied that they will agree with me that there is no alternative left but withdrawing from the city in the best manner and with as little delay as possible!"

Admiral Shuldham made no reply. He was engaged looking through his glass in the direction of Cambridge, where a prolonged cloud of dust indicated the passage of horsemen. He evidently heard every word uttered by General Howe, for his face expressed displeasure, and he bit his lip with vexation.

Howe levelled his glass in the same direction, and discovered that a large party of horse and flying artillery were moving along the road from the centre of Washington's position towards the left side at Dorchester. The cloud of dust extended for full two-thirds of a mile; but only here and there, through openings in the wayside trees, was visible, the body of men thus moving onward.

"Washington, you see, Admiral, is concentrating his troops towards the Neck. He means to press us closely, and perhaps try in a day or two to enter the city by the Roxbury Road."

"More reason that you should make a movement to meet them!" answered the seaman, moodily. "But have your own way. I would sink my ship before I would surrender or run away from a Yankee rebel."

Thus speaking, the Admiral bowed formally and began to descend the long flight of stone steps that led from the terrace to the level lawn in the rear of the house.

"You will meet me at the council, Admiral," said General Howe in a tone perfectly unmoved by the old sailor's displeasure.

"No. You know my opinions. Tell the others what I think. But you will have it all your own way with your smooth smile. If you want men to do as you would have them, you smile, and I swear! but somehow that same smile has the best of it."

"I see you are convinced I ought not attack the heights, but don't like to confess it, my dear Admiral, I am glad you are not vexed as you would have me think. There is, indeed, nothing to be gained by remaining in possession of Boston."

"Where do you expect to go?" asked the Admiral, stopping on the fifth step and looking back.

"To take possession of New York. It is more central, is wholly undefended; there is no American army within three hundred miles of it, and it is everywhere a more advantageous central position for our operations. We do not so much fly



from Boston, dear Shuldham," added Howe, laughing, "as we vacate our position for another more favorable!"

"Well, you would convince the devil, London hadn't a sinner in it. If you decide to give up the ship, just let me know in time and I'll have the transports ready."

"You are very good, Admiral. How many transports are there in all under your command?"

"About one hundred and fifty, great and small. They are not enough, but they will hold all your men if they will lie close."

"You had better at once get them ready for sea and provision them in the best manner you are able. I foresee what the decision of the council of war will be. There is little probability that we shall be here five days longer!"

The Admiral continued his way down the steps of the terrace, crossing the area passed through the hall and so down a still loftier flight of steps leading into Beacon Street. Here, two old tars who were waiting for him as body servants when he went ashore, touched their hats to him and fell in his wake as he moved down the middle of the street at a rolling fore the wind gait, not unlike his own ship of the line when the wind was aft.

"There is no alternative," mused General Howe gravely, as he took a second look at the moving army in the direction of Cambridge, "I must retreat on board the ships ere another week begins. Washington seems the last few days to be in earnest. The opening of Spring has warmed them out as it does a hive of bees! The American chief seems, from yonder long trail of dust to be moving his centre towards his left wing or taking from it a large detachment! The head of war sets towards the southern quarter of the town! I have no alternative but to run away or stay and capitulate. Well, Jocelyn," he cried suddenly, to a young man in the uniform of a colonel of huzzars, who ascended the steps of the terrace with rapid strides. "What news bring you now? From your looks you have reconnoitred along the line to some purpose?"

"The Americans have commenced constructing a redoubt on Nook's Hill, in the peninsula of Dorchester, and are furnishing it with heavy artillery! This I learned from a Tory who crossed the lines as I was reconnoitering. From him I got also the important information that the enemy were about to occupy Noddle's Island, and establish batteries there."

"Then no time is to be lost!" said Howe, with deep interest in this information. "A battery there will sweep the surface of the water, stop the passage of the ships, and reduce us to the necessity of yielding at discretion. I have been watching the movements on Nook's Hill the last half hour, and suspected what they were at."

General Howe then took his glass and levelled it long and earnestly at Noddle's Island which was in full view from his position.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE LETTER.

THE decision of the council of war held on the night of March 15, 1776, in the east room of the Phillip's mansion, occupied by General Howe, as his head-quarters, was, as he had predicted, in favor of immediate evacuation of the town. Indeed its occupation for any longer period would have been madness. Provisions were exorbitantly dear, and so very scarce that hundreds, both of the troops and citizens, rebel as well as loyal, were in a state of starvation; sickness prevailed to an alarming extent, both amongst the inhabitants and soldiery, the latter of whom were great sufferers by their long confinement in such narrow limits combined with the constant activity required of them to prevent surprise. Those who went out in boats to catch a few fish were fired at from the main-land: vegetables had been for months unknown, the bakers had no wood to bake their bread with; and the last batch baked for General Howe and his staff on the day our story opened, was from ovens heated by the wood of the pulpit of the Old South Church; the pews having already been broken up and burned by the soldiers and citizens.

Houses were destroyed for their wood to kindle fires for

cooking and warmth; counters and partitions of warehouses and dwelling houses were demolished for the sake of the wood. Sixteen months the armed occupation of the town had lasted, and a crisis had now been reached, beyond which there was no advancing without ruin or flight. The army under Washington was closing its lines upon the place and the shot from the American batteries fell in the streets of the town, and one missile from a redoubt at Cambridge buried itself in the tower of the church in Brattle street, which was situated in the very heart of the metropolis. Every moment's delay was dangerous.

The council of war was fully alive to the exigency of the situation of the garrison, and it was not requisite that General Howe should *smile* or Admiral Shuldham *swear* (for the Admiral was also present in council), to produce the result to which wisdom and prudence directed them.

"Now," said General Howe, "as the council of war see that it is expedient for the safety of the garrison as well as for the ultimate success of his Majesty's arms in America, that the place be forthwith evacuated, it falls upon me to devise some means whereby this last resort may be achieved without disgrace of our flag and danger to the Army! The Americans now command the town and are erecting batteries at points that will in three days have cannons mounted on Noddle's, and the Islands in the harbor so as effectually to interdict the passage of our ships. By the fire of this artillery they will be able even now to interpose great obstacles to the embarkation of our troops. How to obviate this inconvenience becomes now a question of infinite moment. You have decided that it is best to evacuate the town to-morrow. I will between this and the morning try and hit upon some scheme by which the danger of our movement will be lessened! I trust I shall have your hearty co-operation in and sanction to any measures I may take."

The officers of the council unanimously left the further arrangement of the retreat to his well known judgment, and departed to their several quarters to prepare in haste and secrecy for the embarkation of the ensuing day.

For some time after their departure General Howe walked up and down the hall, where he had taken leave of his officers, buried in profound thought. At no period of his military career had he been placed in a position so delicate and trying. Ten thousand men, not to speak of the honor of the royal arms and his own reputation as a general, were depending on his single mind for safety and life. It was true he had in the emergency called a council of his officers and divided the responsibility of his task with them, receiving their unanimous sanction to the proposed step. But, with all this, he felt that the whole weight of the duty and responsibility, of the odium at home, of the shame with his foes, rested upon him.

In the open door stood a young man, a mere youth, in a neat blue naval undress, and a gold laced cap beneath his arm. The evening wind, as he bared his temples to the cool air of a remarkable warm spring day, blew aside his dark brown locks, and displayed a forehead fair, where the tresses were lifted, but browned otherwheres as if by the tawning breezes of the ocean. He was about nineteen years of age, of a medium stature but compactly built, with a carriage firm and daring. He was, what is to be sure, of little importance save in young females, very handsome; but his beauty was of a manly and courageous character, as if he had been familiar with dangers and deeds that carved upon his face the decision of his active and fearless spirit.

"Neal," said General Howe, addressing this youth, but without lifting his eyes towards him or stopping in his walk up and down the hall.

"Sir William," he responded, in the tone and manner of one on the most intimate terms with the British general.

"I would have you go forthwith to the town house and see if the selectmen are by chance in their office!"

"It will be a chance indeed, if I find them there of a Sunday evening, general. These New England folks are great observers of the Sabbath. I am more likely to find them at prayers." This was spoken with a lively air.

"And I warrant you they pray not for the King either! Go and find them each and all, wherever they may be, and



say to them that I desire a special interview with them to-night on matters touching the present crisis of affairs!"

"I will go, sir! Do you then wish my services further to-night?"

"Not if you are sleepy."

"I am not sleepy," answered the young man slightly coloring; "but I should like to have leave to be free from duty 'till morning."

"Well you have it, Neal. But it seems to me you are a great lover of your leisure of late! Where do you spend your time? Not in your quarters; for I have frequently sent for you there, after begging leave of absence, but neither shadow nor substance were there to be found!"

"Yet when I was really wanted in my regular service of duty have I not been easily found and always present?"

"Yes, that is true! But——" and here the English general fixed his eyes full and searchingly upon the frank face of the young man who, though a sailor, acted as his aide-camp. He then turned away saying, "I will not doubt him!"

"You seem to look upon me strangely, Sir William?"

"It is nothing!"

"You have heard something against me!"

"Yes, to tell the truth, Neal, I have!"

The youth blushed and bit his lip with a look of vexation. He dropped his eyes and seemed embarrassed.

"What have you heard, sir?"

"It is scarcely worth regarding, as it does you so much injustice. It has come to my ears from an anonymous source, that I must be on my guard against you, for you were strongly affected towards rebellion; and that if I wished proof of it, to have you watched when you ask leave of absence and see where you go, and how you pass your time!"

If General Howe had been looking full in the face of the young man while speaking, he would have seen a change of color and a look of confusion that would have confirmed suspicions of his want of loyalty.

"If you do not have full confidence in me, I will return again on board the frigate and resume my duties under Admiral Shuldham!"

"No, no! I trust you. Have I not shown that I do, by making known to you what I have heard. Had I doubted your loyalty, I should have let you depart whither you desire to go, and sent a spy to follow you; for the information I received would make me to believe that you have secret intercourse with the enemy!"

Who could have given you this information, Sir William?"

"It came to me in writing without signature. I have no doubt it is from some enemy who would do you an injury! Do not look so annoyed. You have my unimpaired confidence. Haste to fulfil your mission to the selectmen, and urge them to come and wait on me without delay!"

General Howe then entered the room in which he usually received his officers and transacted business; while the young man, placing his gold lace chapeau upon his head, descended the lofty flight of freestone steps leading to the street, and took his way rapidly towards the centre of the town.

General Howe crossed the hall and rung a small table bell. A youth entered, to whom he said—"Follow Neal unseen. If he quits the town, return, and let me know."

### CHAPTER III.

#### WAS HE PATRIOT OR TORY?

As the British General re-entered his room, a door, at the other side, opened, and a lady came in. She was a woman of noble stature and of a very elegant appearance, with features pleasing, but too strong for beauty. She was about thirty-seven or thirty-eight years of age, with black hair and eyes and an aspect and air not unlike that supposed to characterize Lady Macbeth. Her dress was a black satin, with deep lace-collar and cuffs, and her hair without powder. Her face wore a look of anxiety approaching distress.

"What is this, Sir William, that I have overheard touching suspicion of Neal's loyalty? What know you against my boy?"

"Nothing, Isabel," answered General Howe, composed yet

kindly, as if he respected the feelings of her who addressed him the inquiries. "You have overheard all I know!"

"And you do not believe it! For this my heart is overjoyed! I know he is true and loyal! It is the work of an enemy! What letter did you receive, and when did it come to you?"

"Here it is! You see it has no signature, and is written in a disguised hand, evidently."

As General Howe spoke, he took from a little drawer by the side of his desk, a folded note and placed it in her hand.

With hurried fingers she opened it and read with surprise and alarm as follows:

"Near the Camp at Cambridge,  
March 6.

"SIR:

"A commander-in-chief cannot be too cautious whom he employs about his person, and makes confidants of his plans and purposes; especially in the position you are in, surrounded by enemies whom you have no means of knowing are other than they seem. The writer need not apprise you that the romantic notions of liberty and independence have seized upon the minds of more than one youth in the British army, and that they have become disloyal to their King, and taken arms with the rebels. It will not, therefore, so much surprise you to learn the disaffection and disloyalty of one near your own person, and related to you by ties of consanguinity. I allude to Neal Nelson, against whom I deem it my duty to put you on your guard. I recommend to you to observe closely his conduct, and to watch him when he absents himself from headquarters. It is easy for a traitor who has the pass-word to get out, and in the city, at will. A word to the wise is enough; and General Howe is known not to be wanting in wisdom."

"This is a most extraordinary communication, or rather," said the lady, with looks of surprise and indignation. "It is a plot to ruin Neal! I do not credit a word of the base insinuations. I am glad it has no effect upon you. You did well not to believe or take any notice of it."

"I do not altogether disbelieve it," answered General Howe, in a serious manner.

"Do you then doubt Neal's loyalty?" she asked with astonishment.

"I have seen nothing in him—that is in his conduct that could have raised in my mind the faintest suspicion of his integrity, if this letter had not come to hand! But since I have received it I have thought upon it a good deal, (for you see it's ingeniously worded and well written, and emanates from no vulgar source,) and several free sentiments of his, expressed in conversation from time to time in the past, have flashed upon my recollection; which, however, I did not notice then. I had no suspicion of his fealty and attachment to the King, American born as he is! But as I have since reflected on these remarks of his I have become forcibly impressed with the belief that this letter ought to have weight; and since then I have marked Neal closely."

"And what have you discovered?" asked the lady with deep emotion.

"Nothing new to confirm my suspicion; but you are aware he has the last three months absented himself from quarters a good deal especially at night. This I should not have taken notice of but for this letter! Besides we should not forget that Boston is his birth place! This fact is important in our consideration of the warning in it!"

"This letter is a false and malicious tissue of insinuations," answered the lady warmly. "But if you suspected Neal why have you trusted him!"

"That I might watch him closely and ascertain if he was false!"

"And you have found nothing to confirm your suspicions?" she said with a look of certain triumph.

"Nothing farther than in his request to be absent again to-night, and which doubtless you overheard, as the rest of our conversation reached you!"

"And why have you told him of your suspicions? Is this the way to confirm them? It is strange!"

"I have thought it best, if he is really inclined to disloyalty



to let him know that I am not wholly ignorant of his dereliction and to give him an opportunity of stopping where he is! If I had openly charged him with being a spy or traitor, and he were really guilty, with his high proud spirit he would have taken the first occasion, if I saw fit to leave him at liberty, to go over to the enemy! I have told him of the letter to caution him if he be really guilty, and have continued at the same time my confidence to give him an opportunity of saving his honor!"

"It is possible, but *barely* possible, Sir William," said the lady, thoughtfully, "that Neal may have acted imprudently and perhaps have given ground for this letter; for I am not ignorant of his attachment to his native country. But I trusted and still believe that it is an attachment to it only in its loyalty not in its revolt. It is possible he may have said or done something he should not have done; but I am sure it has been through thoughtlessness and not from intention!"

"Who do you think the warning letter came from?"

"I have not the most distant idea! An enemy of Neal's!"

"I think rather a friend of the King, who has discovered something in Neal which his duty has led him to communicate to me in this manner!"

"How can it be a friend to the King when it is dated from Washington's camp!"

"Examine the date. It is near the camp at Cambridge. The letter is probably from a legal tory who resides near the rebel post; and if I should clearly express all my suspicions, sister, I should say that Neal has been seen by him out of the city."

"Impossible!"

"It is not unlikely. If my nephew has been delayed at all, depend upon it he has seen the inside of the rebel camp!"

"But what motives could have carried him there?" asked the mother of the young man who was the subject of the conversation. "Have you any suspicion of his being proved a traitor to your counsels?"

"I cannot think that! No! He is too honorable to act the spy and repeat what has transpired here!" said Sir William Howe warmly.

"Then what has he done? What reason has he for going to the mainland? I am sure that the letter is unworthy of attention and that some one who does not like him, taking advantage of the fact of his being an American has made this attempt to destroy him! Perhaps some one in the garrison itself."

"It may be so. I shall, however, prove Neal. It is due to him to have a chance of manifesting that he is innocent, and it is due to ourselves that we know whether we have a traitor within our walls."

"I pray he may prove innocent!" cried his mother with deep emotion. "If he is a traitor, William, a mother's bosom shall not shield him from punishment to which you may see fit as a military commander, to deliver him up. But I have faith in his loyalty."

"I trust he will give proof of it," answered the English General with sincerity.

"When he returns will you send him to me?"

"Oh, whither can my boy desire to go! God shield him from evil ways."

"I shall learn whither he has gone?" said Sir William Howe with an impressive manner.

"Have you sent one to observe him?" she asked tremblingly.

"Yes!"

"Then is my boy saved or lost this night," she cried with deep feeling as hearing steps of men ascending from the street she left the room.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### THE TRUCE

THE persons whose footsteps were heard by Isabella Nelson ascending to the door of the mansion, were two in number, and dressed, as the hall lamp showed when they came in front

of the door, in the plain garb of civilians. One of them was tall, grave and classical looking, though his occupation was that of a tradesman; but being a deacon also, he deemed it proper to assume as nearly as possible, without infringing too closely upon the privileges of the "cloth," the costume of a man of God. His countenance was strongly marked and beamed with shrewdness and benevolence. He wore a long queue bound with black silk ribbon and carried a cane with a gold head to which appended a tassel. His step was staid and stately as became a deacon of the church and a selectman of the town of Boston.

His companion was a man of less stature and more abdomen; a smooth, oily personage in visage, and one who laughed more than became the gravity of a dignitary and ruler of the town. He carried, as was always his custom in fair weather and foul, a green umbrella which he used as a staff. His knee buckles of silver shone brightly in rivalry of his shoe buckles which were of polished steel, with settings of glass cut in representation of diamonds. He carried visibly in the pocket of his brown cloth coat, a blue spotted silk handkerchief, and held in his hand a tortoise shell snuff-box, out of which every two minutes and a half, charged his nose with rappee, each of which charges was duly followed by a sneezing explosion.

"Ah, gentlemen, I am happy to see you," said the English General, advancing into the hall to receive his expected guests. "You are prompt in complying with my wishes."

Thus speaking the accomplished English commander extended his hand to each.

The glasses were emptied and General Howe entered into conversation with the two rulers of the town, in which he insidiously forced the way for his purposes. At length the remainder of the selectmen arrived, and then closing his door, the English General opened to them as follows the object of the interview he sought of them:

"You are aware, gentlemen," he said, addressing himself particularly to Mr. Greene the chief of the Board, a man of intelligence and wisdom, "you are aware that a crisis in the state of the garrison occupying your town has been reached. I need not inform you of what you already know, that Boston is no longer a safe position for the British troops. Washington is acquainted with the distresses that prevail here among us and is now active in taking advantage of them. In a word, gentlemen, it must be as clear to your minds as to my own, that I can no longer hold the post in safety or with honor."

"We are quite as well convinced of your inability, Sir William Howe, as you seem to be yourself, to maintain the town many days longer," said Mr. Greene, with dignity; "I therefore trust that you are prepared to capitulate upon terms—"

"Capitulate, sirs!" repeated the British General, haughtily! "The word I am ignorant of while I command in his Majesty's name!"

"Then for what purpose have you called us together by a special and urgent message?"

"You shall learn, gentlemen, that it is not to sue to you or to throw myself upon your mercy!" he answered, haughtily.

"This is high language, Sir William Howe, and is well enough to cover your weakness, but it cannot deceive us," answered Mr. Greene, with decision. "We are fully informed, and through us, General Washington is, also, of your actual position. We know that you have not seven thousand troops out of a nominal force of ten thousand, fit for service. We know that a thousand of your people are lying ill in your military hospitals, and that those who are well are weak and discontented from the privations in food and warmth to which they have been subjected. We know that disaffection and bitterness pervades your garrison, and that only a spark is needed to kindle a flame of revolt throughout the length and breadth of your barracks. We know that the American Commander-in-Chief, aware of your situation, proposes to bring the siege to a close by a decisive blow. The truth of this you have evidence of, in the redoubts that are being nightly thrown up on every side of you, and almost within gunshot of your own sentries and outposts! We know that you have not provisions to sustain your men twenty days longer, and that you look for no reinforcements; for we are not ignorant that you have of late been bitter in your invectives against the ministry for



neglecting you and forgetting you, as you have termed their silence. Knowing all this, we are prepared to hear from you proposals for terms that we may transmit them to General Washington in your behalf!"

Sir William Howe listened with surprise and an angry frown to this bold address from one of the rebel rulers of the town, whom in his pleasure he had permitted to hold office and power. But he could not but feel the full force of his words. He knew that the facts were as the Selectmen had represented them. But the more critical his situation was, the more needful it was for him to put a bold front upon it.

"If you think I am to be a suppliant to you, Mr. Selectmen, you are in great error," he said firmly. "I am as fully advised of my position as you can be. To sue to you or through you to Washington, was not my object in sending for you to-night. I know not only the difficulties that environ me, but I have confidence as well in my ability to cope with them. A British general with eight thousand regular troops under his command has victory in his hand whenever he chooses to go to battle. We do not count Washington's twenty thousand rabble as a force at which to be intimidated."

"Then why have you not taken possession of the Heights of Dorchester, Sir William?" asked Mr. Buzzel, who had been trying for some time to get a word in.

"Because, sir, it is no object for me to hold them. Neither, gentlemen," he continued, addressing them all in a bold manner, "neither is it an object for the crown longer to hold Boston! It is of no further use to his Majesty. In a word, I would let you see the policy of the Ministry, at which you accuse me of murmuring. My instructions were to hold Boston until I had concentrated the body of the American forces in the neighborhood, and draw upon this single point the attention and armed power of the whole country. When I had done so, my intentions were to withdraw on board the fleet, which, for this purpose, I have, as you have seen, detained in port, and embark for some other point of your shores unguarded, and there take possession, and from it, as a centre, subdue the adjacent region. Having, therefore, fulfilled my instructions, I have sent for you to say that it is my intention, tomorrow or next day to evacuate the town and retire on board the shipping. It is possible to maintain the town, and I would maintain it at all odds were the advantages commensurate with the trouble. But the experience of the last few months has shown me that the port of Boston is far from being conveniently situated to accommodate the future operations of the army that is expected soon to arrive from England. A desire to concentrate at this point all the American forces, has hitherto prevented me from withdrawing from the town. This motive of delay no longer exists, for in whatever direction I level my spy-glass around the peninsula I behold the armies of the rebels gathering and settling themselves like flights of locusts."

When the British General had ended this subtle address, the selectmen looked at one another with blank faces. Surprise was manifested on each countenance. Even Mr. Greene appeared amazed at the high position taken by the general who seemed already in their power; he was, as well as his colleagues confounded by the new arguments he had advanced. Mr. Buzzel took snuff very rapidly, and looked from one to another as if uncertain how to take the affair, until he had guessed at the sentiments of the rest.

"You have given us, Sir William, a fair display of that diplomacy for which you have said to be famed," said Mr. Greene. "It may be true that you have had instructions such as you mention. I do not wish to question the veracity of any gentleman, though he be my country's foe and invader. But whether or no your experience has proved to you that Boston Port is not perfectly accommodated to the future operations of the army; yet it needs no proof that you are in no condition to remain in possession of the place, should to-night arrive, from Lord Dartmouth, instructions, ordering you to hold it, to use your own expression, 'at all odds.' Let us perfectly understand each other, Sir William! Your words have not changed my mind from the first conviction which it received when your young aid-de-camp, Mr. Nelson, brought me your request to see me in my official capacity."

"And, pray, sir, what was this conviction?" asked the English General, appearing slightly confused.

"That you saw the strait in which your garrison was placed and desired to arrange terms of capitulation for the safety of all; for you are well aware that our cannon already commands or will do so before you could embark, the passage of the harbor, and that it is impossible for you to escape without the consent of your enemies."

The English General-in-Chief colored deeply at this assertion. He well knew the fact. He was perfectly aware that in twenty-four hours more the Americans would interdict the passage to sea; and that he could, in less time, scarcely hope with the greatest haste of departure, to embark his numerous forces. For a few moments he remained silent. He saw that it was useless to attempt longer to trifle with the body of men he had called before him, or to endeavor to make them believe to save the credit of the royal arms, that he was voluntarily leaving the town. He, therefore, resolved to enter at once upon the matter in a frank, business manner.

"Whatever be the immediate cause of the act, gentlemen, it is not material to our purpose," he said, in a grave manner; "let it suffice for you to know that I have resolved to abandon the town of Boston and retire on board the fleet. It is my intention to withdraw *peaceably*, if your countrymen are disposed, on their part, to act in the same manner. I have sent for you to make known to you this my purpose, that you may wait on General Washington and report to him what I say to you and to him through you."

"You are no doubt willing enough to retire unmolested, sir," said Mr. Farrington, standing up and stretching his tall, gaunt form to its loftiest dimensions; "but it is a question whether our outraged and indignant country will be so willing to let you retire in this manner. You have no choice! Retire you must! Your situation admits neither of hesitation or delay! Therefore you cannot say, you will not withdraw if we will not give our promise to let you go quietly, you with your goods, your arms, your camp furniture, and your spoils; for you must go, whatever we do, or remain and give yourselves up prisoners of war!"

"Sir," said Mr. Buzzel, looking very red in the cheeks and rapping his snuff-box cover with an emphasis that made a report like that of a pocket-pistol. "Sir, do you suppose, sir, that Sir William, sir, that we are going to let you go in peace with your wives and little ones, flocks and herds, gods, and goddesses, as my friend the Deacon just re——"

"I said nothing about gods and goddesses, squire," interrupted the Deacon, sternly.

"True, deacon, but its no matter, sir! I did! Do you think, Sir William, sir, that we who have been sixteen months shut up here, starving, freezing, dying with the plague for want of food and fire wood, and innumerable other evils too numerous to enumerate—do you suppose, sir—! No sir! I would buckle on my sword, sir, first, sir, and stand at the head of Long Wharf, sir, with it drawn in my hand, sir, and would singly stay your departure, if I had to lay down the last drop of blood I had in my body, sir! Yes, sir!"

Here Mr. Buzzel took a huge pinch of snuff, and drank a glass of Sir William's Burgundy, it being the eighth bumper he had taken, which will account for his very extraordinary speech; for between snuff, wine, and patriotism, Mr. Buzzel was very tipsy.

"Mr. Buzzel," said deacon Farrington, laying his large hand upon the little man's shoulder, "you have this day brought discredit upon the good name of the rulers of the town. You have drank wine beyond sobriety. Be silent, sir, for when the wine is in the wit is out!"

"I cannot see, General Howe, on what grounds you can ask leave of us, to be suffered to retire in peace," said Mr. Greene. "You have brought by your presence a blight upon the land, and vengeance and justice cry for retribution!"

"On the ground of your own interest and safety! Although compelled to retire, I am not impotent! I have caused to be prepared, several tons of combustible materials to set fire to the city, should the provincials molest me in my departure in any shape. One word from me and your fair town would be laid in ashes! Further, I invite you, gentlemen, to reflect upon the dangers which must inevitably result, for you and your habitations and those of the numerous families friendly



to your side of the quarrel now in the city if a battle should be fought between the garrison and the American forces under Washington, in your streets. For the distress and misery of such a deplorable event, fall upon your own heads, not on mine. I have offered to retire peaceably. I will do so if I am unmolested. But if in case I commence embarking my troops they are molested, I will fire and sack the city ere I leave it!"

"Such a proceeding would recoil on yourselves," said Mr. Greene, firmly. "Not a transport would ever quit the harbor—not a British soldier would escape alive."

"That may be. But is not forbearance with your city whole and your citizens secure better than these alternatives to either of us? If therefore, you have the interest of your town and the happiness of your fellow-citizens at heart, I would exhort you to see General Washington early in the morning. Repeat to him what you have heard from me, and say to him that I demand the following conditions; that I have fifty hours to embark my troops in from the time he grants the terms of the truce; that I depart with all the munitions of war in my possession; that I shall be permitted to take with me as many of the loyalist families with their effects as desire to abandon the country; and that those which remain shall have their personal liberty secured to them; that I shall be permitted to remain anchored in the harbor until the wind, now unfavorable, shall permit the fleet to depart!"

"We will wait upon General Washington, sir," said Mr. Greene, after he and his colleagues had conversed apart for a little while; "But I do not think he will consent to all the conditions you demand!"

"General Washington is a wise man, and will not let a temporary advantage prevent the accomplishment of so desirable a result on my departure from Boston."

The selectmen waited upon the American commander-in-chief on the ensuing morning. They laid before him the propositions of Sir William Howe. At first he rejected them; but finally, on their making a very effecting representation of the situation of the city he consented to all the conditions demanded save the removal of the munitions. The English General yielded this exception and prepared gladly to withdraw from a position which he could no longer hold in safety.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE EVACUATION OF THE TOWN.

ON the seventeenth of March, sixteen hours after the ratification of the truce required by Sir William Howe, the British troops were in motion preparatory to embarkation. So early as four o'clock, long before the first light of dawn began to show itself in the East, the garrison marched out of barracks and formed along Cornhill, Beacon street and upon the Common. The morning broke upon eight thousand wearied and worn troops, suffering by cold, scanty clothing and hunger, drawn up in lines, each man burdened with what he could carry upon his back. The morning was chilly and foggy and contributed to the dispirited air of the men who felt that their condition was likely to be but improved by being crowded on board transports and subjected to the dangers of the inhospitable seas of that region and the horrors of sea-sickness. Not a company when its rolls was called, was found complete. Numbers preferring to be taken prisoners by the Americans or desiring to join their standard had secreted themselves in the barracks and houses under cover of the darkness.

At five o'clock the order for the line to form in column and march was communicated; and without colors displayed and merely with the tap of a drum commenced its melancholy retreat through Cornhill and State street and in the direction of Long Wharf. Here they were embarked as fast as the boats from the one hundred and fifty transports could be filled with men and rowed off to the ships to return and take fresh numbers.

The American citizens of the town remained quiet spectators of the retreat of their brethren; being ordered by General Howe

to keep in their houses. They crowded the roofs and balconies to observe their march through the town to the water-side; but not a shout or cry of derision was raised. They gazed in the same silence with which the troops moved by.

There were in the town fifteen hundred loyalists or Tories, who, many of them were wealthy citizens, and had been born in Boston. They now began to feel the effects of their blind attachment to the royal side. Compelled with infinite dejection and tears of regret to abandon residences so long dear to them they had been engaged since the evening before, when the orders was issued from head quarters to prepare for evacuating the city in twelve hours, in packing up their personal property and securing their valuables. When the morning dawned, hundreds of these families were seen hurrying from their homes, where they had long dwelt in luxury, and enjoyed years of felicity and seeking an asylum on board the ships. There was no distinction of suffering. The rich who had the most valuables to remove suffered more than others; for the poor man could carry all his load upon his shoulders and upon the backs of his wife and children; but the rich, weary with much goods, were dependent upon carts and wagons to remove to the wharf what he would carry away. But such was the scene of confusion and distress, and so great was the demand for wagons that all could not be supplied; and some of the fathers of families, once among the most influential in the Commonwealth, were now bending under burdens which they could get no man to carry. Mothers, young and delicately reared, carried their children and took their way weeping towards the decks; "the last salutations," says the eloquent historian Botta, "the farewell embraces of those who departed and of those who remained, the sick, the wounded, the aged, the infants, would have moved with compassion the witnesses of their distress, if the care of his own safety had not absorbed the attention of each one."

The carts and beasts of burden became the occasion of sharp disputes and in various parts of the town fierce battles took place between the soldiers who would seize upon them and the tory inhabitants who would maintain them. Even the march of the main column was more than once obstructed by fearful contests between the loyalists themselves for the possession of horses and wagons with which to convey their effects to the shipping. Added to this one's fear lest he should be left behind to fall into the hands of the enemy, and a desire to secure first a berth on board the transports. Whither the fleet which received them was destined, no one knew and the uncertainty was an additional cause of anxiety and distress to the more intelligent portion of the flying loyalists.

Meanwhile, a desperate band of English soldiers and sailors who had fallen into the rear of the embarking army took advantage of the confusion to force doors and pillage the houses and shops of whatever the loyalists could not remove; and even attempted the dwelling of the provincials who, however, met them with such firmness that they were under the necessity of confining their lawless depredations exclusively to the deserted abodes of the tories, in which they found a great deal that was valuable that had been deserted by the owners least delay should lose them a chance of getting a berth in the ships. These desperadoes destroyed what they could not carry away. The city before this presented an appearance melancholy enough but now it had an aspect of devastation that it was painful to contemplate. Thrice they fired the houses they had pillaged, but by the prompt energy of the citizens the flames were extinguished and the town saved from conflagration.

By ten o'clock in the forenoon the whole garrison was embarked on board the shipping, and in the very face of the American batteries which completely commanded the embarkation. But the latter only remained distant and quiet spectators of the scene. The vessels, many of which were small, overladed with men and baggage, and the fruits of the indiscriminate pillage, as well as with the effects of the unhappy loyalists. Provisions were very scanty, not enough being on board at first for the full allowance of the crews and soldiers; and the loyalists had brought only plate and other articles which at that crisis were of less value than bread. Confusion reigned throughout the fleet. Every deck of the one hundred



and fifty-three transports was a scene of discord unparalleled. Women weeping, infants screaming, men moaning and lamenting the loss of property left behind, soldiers cursing and drinking, and the seamen, unable to do anything, swearing at all.

Scarcely had the last crowded boat load of soldiers left the end of Long Wharf when the roar of cannons from the American lines south of the town announced that Washington had commenced the march of his army to take possession of the deserted town. The report of the artillery was responded to by the citizens with loud shouts of gratitude and joy. They now poured from their houses in the streets and hastened towards the Neck to receive the Deliverer.

General Howe; who was the last man to embark, had hardly placed his foot in the boat that was to take him to the shipping, when Washington entered the town on the other side, with colors displayed, drums beating, "Yankee Doodle," and all the forms of victory and triumph. Mounted upon a snow white charger, and attended by his general aide, among whom rode Neal Nelson, the chief, triumphantly entered the principal street of the city, and at every step of his advance was hailed by the citizens so long forcibly held prisoners to the garrison, as a deliverer and conqueror.

"Their joy," says the historian, "broke forth with more vivacity as their sufferings had been long and cruel. For more than sixteen months they had endured hunger, thirst, cold, and the insults of an insolent soldiery, who deemed them rebels; and suffering in common with the garrison, the horrors of famine, they had been reduced even to subsist on the flesh of horses!"

The victorious besieging army, numbering sixteen thousand organized troops, passed into town, battalion after battalion, and, after passing through the whole length of Cornhill, marched to the common, and then formed.

On riding over the town, and receiving the reports of the selectmen and citizens of the sufferings of the inhabitants, which were apparent in their hollow cheeks and emaciated forms, Washington was seen to be so deeply moved as to shed tears. He found that the English had left a great quantity of artillery and munitions; but among them little or no powder, of which the army was nearly destitute.

Thus, after a siege of long duration the capital of the province of Massachusetts fell again into the hands of the Americans.

## CHAPTER VI.

### A SON OF LIBERTY.

Contrary winds, succeeded by a dead calm, prevented the English fleet from getting to sea until the eighth day after the troops were taken on board—a period of intense suffering and privation to all on board.

At length the wind became favorable, and the fleet sailed. Its destination was unknown. The general opinion was, that it was destined for Charleston or New York; but it actually sailed for Halifax, where it arrived after a remarkably short passage.

For the subsequent movements of General Howe, the reader is referred to the histories of the period.

As the evacuation of Boston could not be known to English vessels then at sea, or to others just about sailing from Europe for the port of Boston, Admiral Shuldham had left in the waters of Boston Bay a small squadron, under the command of Commodore Banks, to protect the navigation of the vessels of the King, which, in ignorance of the evacuation of the city, might continue their voyage towards it. "This precaution, however, had not all the effect," says Botta, "that was desired; the bay being extensive, the American cruisers lay in concealment behind the numerous little islands with which it is interspersed, and sprang suddenly upon the ships that presented themselves without mistrust. It is at this crisis, and amid these islands, that our story will be resumed when we shall have followed our hero, Neal Nelson, after his departure from the presence of his uncle, Sir William Howe, on his mission to the Selectmen. But we will first explain why a sailor, as he was, should have been made an aid of the military Commander-in-Chief.

Isabella Howe, the General's sister, had early married a

young lieutenant without any other qualifications than his sword, a handsome person, great courage, and an honorable fame. This marriage was kept secret for some time, as she knew that her family would refuse its sanction. It was, however discovered, and to escape persecution, Lieutenant Nelson fled with his wife to Boston. On the birth of her only child, Neal, she wrote and made it known to her brothers, who, however, were so exasperated, that they succeeded by their influence in getting her husband removed to the East India station in a time of great mortality, where he fell a victim to the climate.

Subsequently Sir William regretted the act, and as an atonement, sent for his sister and got a midshipman's berth in the service for his nephew. Neal was seven years old when he left Boston for England with his mother. At eleven he entered the navy under his uncle, lord Admiral Howe. When he reached his nineteenth year he accompanied General Sir William Howe to Boston in Admiral Shuldham's frigate to which he was attached. When General Howe took up his quarters on shore he invited Neal to take up his abode with him. While he was here, his mother, who had not seen her son for several years, came over to visit him and became an inmate of Sir William's abode. Neal was daily in the presence of his uncle, and in his full confidence. In his character he was frank and manly, and every feeling of rectitude and honor inspired his conduct. His very face invited confidence; and no one who knew him could believe that he would be guilty of any act of dishonor. His mother, whom he tenderly loved, was proud of the high tone of his feelings, and anticipated for him the most brilliant career. Sir William regarded him with affection and relied implicitly upon his loyalty and good faith.

Neal was all that his mother or his uncle believed him to be. He was honorable, noble in mind, truthful and sincere in character. But all was consistent with sympathy for the wrongs of the land which gave him birth! From the time he set foot on shore at Boston, six months previous to its evacuation, he could not forget that he was born there—that he was an American. He remembered, as he roamed about the town, the Common, Beacon and Copp's Hill, all the places which in his early boyhood he had frequented. His spirit from every scene drank in that love of country which is so strong in the American boy.

By degrees his mind, naturally active and intelligent, began to examine the quarrel between the land of his birth and the mother country. He found among his provincials who were retained in the town, an old man, who related to him the whole history of grievances; who unfolded to him the tyranny and oppression of England, the forbearance and suffering of the Colonies in their true light. His heart was fired by the recital, and his sympathies gradually became enlisted with those who were so bravely battling for independence. Yet he by no means thought of joining his countrymen. The idea of quitting the service of his king never for a moment entered his mind. He felt for and sympathized with the Americans, but he dreamed not of disloyalty. He could admire the spirit of the patriots without feeling any desire to desert the service of the king.

But the seeds of liberty once sown in the heart will first take root downward and then spring its stalk upward into open view. Neal's was a mind well fitted for the promotion of the up-springing of such a plant. The subject was ever upon his mind. The character of Washington commanded his admiration and respect. His patience and perseverance and endurance of the American soldiery astonished him. Daily he thought upon their cause, until, at length, he found himself, in the presence of his uncle, speaking warmly in praise of the American General, and wishing that the King and ministry would do justice to the Colonies.

"And do you think they are doing injustice, Neal?" asked Sir William Howe surprised.

"Yes, sir!" said the young man firmly. "I have examined the whole ground of quarrel, and I feel satisfied that England is in the wrong. I am satisfied, also, that if the ministry would look to it impartially they would see that they cannot be sustained in equity in the course they have taken!"

"You had best go home in a frigate, nephew, and teach the



ministry," said Sir William Howe, laughing. "If you will undertake the mission, I will despatch a ship with you to-morrow."

Neal's cheek burned, and he felt a little vexed and mortified; but the reception his opinion had met with, did not diminish his awakening patriotism. The sneering manner in which his uncle had replied to him stung and angered him. A few days afterwards he was led a second time to speak, with unguarded zeal of the bravery which a party of Americans had exhibited in a certain encounter with a detachment of the British on a foraging expedition, and Sir William Howe could not but see from his eye and tone, as well as from his words, that his sympathies went strongly with the American party, and that he felt glad at the defeat of the British; for the latter had been discomfited and driven within their lines with the loss of many men killed and taken prisoners.

"You had best join the rebels at once, Neal!" answered his uncle, fixing upon the young seaman a keen look.

"I have no wish to join them, sir," he answered firmly; "but I still feel persuaded that they are fighting in a cause that will be ultimately successful. Such men can never be conquered."

"We shall at least try to conquer them, nephew," said the English General in a tone of derision. "If you have such sentiments as these, you had best dismiss them at once from your mind, or not give them utterance!"

"I do not fear to speak as I think," said Neal firmly.

"It is not always safe to do so, young man. Your language has treason in it, and if spoken before such men as Shuldham or Gage, would lose you your liberty. But I am aware of the warmth of your feelings, and know you are more thoughtless than traitorous. So let me hear no more of this!" This conversation took place about three weeks preceding the evacuation of the place.

Neal obeyed his uncle. From that day he was careful to conceal from him his thoughts, not, however, because he had been commanded to do so, but because a change had taken place in his character and feelings that rendered precaution necessary for his safety; for he had in the interval, fully committed himself though secretly, in the rebel cause; and so far as to lead him to resolve when an opportunity should offer, to withdraw from the town, and attach himself to the provincial party.

How this change and determination was brought about, and the instrument that achieved it, will be explained in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER VII.

### COLONEL JOCELYN SUSPECTS.

THE severity with which Sir William Howe reprimanded his youthful relative for the free expression of his opinion, accompanied as the reproof was with ridicule, vexed Neal not a little. His pride was touched by the contempt with which his bold avowal of his sentiments had been received. He was at that age, and of that frank, ingenuous temper which knows no double dealing, and which fearlessly manifests its emotions. Neal saw nothing to occasion surprise, that, because he thought the Americans were right in resistance, he should say so. He had not lived so long in the world as to learn that the truth must sometimes be withheld; and that men must speak as interest and prejudice dictate. Though serving England he did not feel himself the less competent to see the difference between right and wrong; nor, seeing it, did he suspect that he was doing anything reproachable in making known his sentiments.

He was therefore not a little annoyed by the manner in which his uncle had received his opinions. For this uncle, he had not of late felt a very ardent attachment. He had, not many days before, learned from his mother for the first time, the history of her marriage, of her persecution, of her father's wicked death, and the relentless conduct of her uncle towards him and her. He had, when she discovered her honest indig-

nation, pledged himself to his mother not to show any ill-will towards Sir William Howe, but to manifest the same respect as formerly towards him. The promise was easier than its execution. Neal could not from that day but feel that he was in the presence of a man that had proved the greatest enemy to his parents. This feeling of resentment went far to sever his attachment both to his uncle and to the royal cause. He felt that he no longer owed to his uncle duty or service.

The manner in which his free expression of opinion was received a few days after his mother's communication, did not by any means serve to increase his regard for his distinguished relative. A few moments afterwards he left the room to retire ostensibly to his quarters, which were a few doors farther east on the same street. Instead of entering the dwelling where his room was, he passed by it and took his way rapidly down School street and across Cornhill in the direction of Fort Hill. It was seven o'clock in the evening and the air was filled with snow, for it was the last of January, about six weeks previous to the evacuation of the town. Here and there at the corners of the streets, or in passing guard houses he was challenged by the sentries, who, enveloped in their thick winter coats, paced up and down at a quick tread on their posts, and looking, by the light of the lamps swung above the sentry-box, like shaggy Greenland bears.

As he passed the old South which was occupied as a barracks for a corps of cavalry he saw an officer just dismounting at the West door, who throwing his bridle to a sergeant crossed the walk as he went by so as to intercept him. Neal was enveloped in a storm jacket such as naval officers stand watch in, in heavy weather, and perhaps was recognized by it, rather than by his features, which were nearly concealed within the meeting collar.

"Ah, Nelson, is it you?"

"Yes, Colonel Jocelyn. How do you do to-night?"

"Cleverly, thank you! But whither away such a blustering night? Come in and take something to warm yourself. I have been out the last two hours towards the Roxbury lines watching the movements of a party of infernal rebels who have been skulking since sun-down about the Neck as if bent on mischief. We sent a few shot at them but they took no more notice of the balls than as if they had been wooden bowls and themselves so many nine-pins. I received orders to be ready to make a cavalry charge upon them if they came nearer, but they have at length retired, and so I am at liberty to go to sleep, a luxury I haven't enjoyed this thirty-six hours, save in the saddle."

"Where are your men?" asked Neal carelessly.

"They came up in advance of me a quarter of an hour ago, and I dare say sound asleep in the galleries of this puritan conventicle, every soul of them. But come in, I have a bed and a bumper for you."

"Thank you; I have an engagement," answered Neal.

"With a pretty rebel, I dare swear," responded Jocelyn, laughing. "Do you know I have heard of your being a very frequent guest with that old rebel, Colonel Parks. They say he has a pretty niece; but I have not had the pleasure of seeing her yet; for she secludes herself like a nun."

Neal colored in spite of an effort to command the expression of his face, and said in a gay tone:

"Rebel Colonels may have fair nieces enough in Boston, and the gallant Col. Jocelyn may be far more wise upon the matter than I."

With this reply he passed on, bidding the huzzar officer good night. He turned into Milk street, and so on, to what is now known as Pearl street. He ascended it about half-way, and then stopped in front of a stately mansion, three stories in height, facing the West, and separated from the street by a terrace garden.

After looking carefully about him, to see if he was observed, he entered the gate, and, ascending to the front door, knocked for admittance.

After a little delay, the door was opened by an old man, erect and stately in his figure, and with an air at once venerable and military. When he recognised his visitor, he smiled and extended his hand with cordial and affectionate welcome.



"Come in, my son: the storm is most too violent for you to be abroad."

"I am a seaman, sir, and little regard the weather," answered Neal, as he entered.

"Come in and let me hear what news you have. We live so retired we get nothing certain, though strange accounts are continually coming to us through our domestics. Never mind stopping to knock off the snow outside. Hang your coat in the hall as it is. We New Englanders are not afraid to have snow brought into our houses."

Neal removed his rough coat, which was fairly whitened with the flakes, and followed the old gentlemen into a small comfortable parlor, warmed by a blazing wood fire. The whole apartment wore an air of quiet, grave respectability, without ostentation or luxury. An old fashioned calico sofa and two arm chairs, the backs embroidered with heraldic designs, invited to comfortable repose. Over the mantle piece was a portrait of Queen Anne, and around the walls hung pictures of battles in Flanders, set in carved frames, of great antiquity. The andirons were brass dogs, and shone like the sun; while the brass latches and locks of the door rivalled them in lustre. A pipe upon the mantle showed that the host loved to smoke; and a book-case of three or four hundred volumes, partly hid by a green curtain, betrayed his love for literature.

On one side of the fire-place stood a small work-table, on which lay a piece of needle-work in a state of progress, and the needle sticking in it, the low rocking chair still in motion: a lady's handkerchief lying on the floor betrayed that the embroiderer had but the instant before deserted it, probably on hearing the rap at the door.

Neal looked at the little work-table and chair as he entered with the animated look of one about to address some one whom he expected to find occupying it; but the instant change that passed across his face showed his disappointment.

"Anne will return in a moment, Neal. She did not know it was you or she would not have run."

But her father was mistaken. It was because she knew it was Neal that she did fly! She flew to change her dress, for not expecting any visitors so stormy a night she was in a sort of home undress; which though sweetly becoming, and displayed her exquisite shape to the most unconceivable advantage, she did not think it proper to appear in before a young gentleman; for Anne Parks, though possessed of excellent taste, had not yet learned that our sex are most charmed with simplicity of costume in hers.

"What is this rumor, my young friend, that Sir William Howe proposed to march out with the whole garrison tomorrow, and give General Washington battle?" asked Colonel Parks, after Neal had seated himself in the opposite arm chair to his own, leaving the low-cushioned rocking-chair to be occupied by her for whose return his throbbing heart and listening ears were waiting.

"There is no foundation for the rumor, ripe as it is.

"Yes, there is no question but that such a report had been circulated by General Howe."

"Yes; his motive in doing it, I can now say to you, sir, without betraying his confidence in me, was to draw Washington's forces all to one focus at Roxbury; when taking advantage of the open country he meant to land a large detachment at Lechmere Point, to forage for provisions. But as the American General, with his characteristic penetration, has seen through the ruse, and kept his army quiet, the plan has failed."

"I guessed this was his motive. Howe is in no situation to fight a battle. He is growing each day weaker, and in six months' time unless he is reinforced from England he will have to capitulate or withdraw on board the shipping."

"One of these results is inevitable. But my sympathies are no longer with the royal cause."

"Indeed! are you then become one of us?" asked the old man with sparkling eyes. "I have been looking for this! I have hoped for it. I have refrained from advising or urging you to be with us. I have satisfied myself with explaining to you all the causes of our differences with England and the motive which led us to take up arms, leaving the interferences to your own good sense and justice. I have understood fully

your position and nephew and aid of the General-in-chief, and I have forbore to influence you, though I have felt that time would produce a change and lead you to right decision and acting!"

"Yes, decision and action is what I have been deficient in, sir. But I fear you place more meaning upon my words than I meant to give them. I meant to say that I am satisfied that the King is wrong, and the Provincials right; that the latter have my hearty wishes for their ultimate independence of the crown."

"I did then give too much meaning to your words, my young friend," said the venerable patriot with a look of disappointment.

"I can condemn the course of England, and yet remain in her service."

"True, true! There are others in your army that do not approve of the war against us, yet are prepared to slaughter us!"

"They cannot resign without ruining themselves, or doubtless they would do so."

"Is there no other course for them to take? Is nothing else suggested to their minds? Must they remain in service or sink into beggary? Shall I speak more plainly? are there not two sides to this quarrel; are there not two armies? If one is engaged in a wrong cause is not the other in a right one?"

Neal listened with surprise. He had never conceived that the legitimate fruit of his growing dissatisfaction ought to be the arming himself in the cause of freedom. He had not thought of joining Washington, if he should withdraw from Howe and the service; or, if such ideas had occurred to him, they were vague and indecisive.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### NEAL TO THE RESCUE.

Such were Neal's feelings when he received the reproof from his uncle which had offended his pride. "I will, from this time, cease to share in this quarrel. No gratitude binds me to my uncle. No honor binds me to my country's service in a wicked cause. I will resign, and let the odium of that invasion of the Colonies rest with those who war against them. I will bear none of it longer on my conscience."

It was with such feelings that he left his presence and sought secretly the abode of Colonel Park. This gentleman had been a distinguished officer in the early French wars, and had returned from the army a few years before the breaking out of the revolution, and resumed the practice of law in Boston. Here he resided when General Gage then in command, committed those acts of aggression upon him, the scorn of all men, and raised the spirit of resistance. Boston was surrounded by an army, and Gage began to fortify the town to stand a siege. The citizens in alarm began to fly to the country lest they should be shut up with the garrison.

At first he permitted them to go after first stacking their arms in Faneuil Hall; but discovering that they conveyed away a great deal of valuable property beside provisions, and seeing that each man would increase the strength of the rebel forces, he suddenly issued an order forbidding any more to depart. The promulgation of this order found a large number of the citizens still in town, who were subsequently involved in all the miseries of the siege of sixteen months which followed. Among these citizens was Colonel Parks and his family, which consisted of a nephew and niece and a maiden sister. The nephew succeeded afterwards in effecting his escape and joining Washington. When this was discovered, a sentry was placed at the door of the family mansion.

One day not long after the guard was placed there, Neal was passing and saw a young and beautiful girl endeavoring to prevail upon him to permit her to enter the house. Neal saw the soldier was insolent and the female was very much alarmed; for two or three tipsy young officers were crossing the street towards her, singing a gay song.

"What means this, fellow?" demanded Neal of the sentinel.

"I have orders not to let any one pass out without a permit."



answered the man respectfully, as he recognized the general's nephew.

"You wish to go in, I believe," said Neal, addressing the shrinking and terrified girl.

"Yes, sir."

He regarded her an instant with deep admiration and then said, with courtesy:

"Suffer me to escort you! The soldier is insolent and shall be arrested."

He offered her his arm and attended her to the door of the mansion. The grateful girl turned and thanked him with a glance that thrilled to his soul, and in a voice that sounded sweeter to his charmed ears than any music that had ever fallen upon them.

She was scarcely eighteen, with heavenly blue eyes, and soft fair hair, and one of those pure complexions that are the index of a sunny spirit. She was slight in person, and airy as a sylph in her movements. Neal's heart was at once taken captive. Yet the lovely Anne Parks was all unconscious of her power.

"You will be so kind as to come in and let my uncle thank you, sir," she said, in a way that was totally irresistible. "I ought not to have gone out without him; but a poor woman whose son is in prison on suspicion of having tried to escape to the army, and who is in great distress, sent for me; and, forgetful of the peril of being abroad, I hastened to her. On my return another soldier was on duty before the door, who refused to let me enter, when you were so good as to interpose in my behalf."

"I am most happy to serve you. The sentry shall at once and altogether removed from your door."

"I thank you sir, if you have influence enough with General Howe."

"You may depend upon the removal of this annoyance," he said, very decidedly.

He accepted his invitation to enter the house, wondering how so much beauty had been so long secluded in the town from his view or knowledge. He did not go in because he wished her father to be thanked. The gratitude of the lovely provincial was enough. He wished to know and see more of her, and to learn who she could be.

The result of all was that he became a frequent guest at the house of the old soldier, he passed there the hours in which he absented himself from his quarters. Colonel Parks soon discovered the worth and excellency of character in his young visitor, and conversed with him freely upon the state of affairs, conveying instruction and truth in all he said. Neal became a gratified listener, for Anne in whom he had discovered a playmate of his childhood listened also! In this way he became acquainted with the great principles which actuated the Americans, and convinced of the injustice of England. Neither father nor daughter used an argument to bring him over to the provincial party. Colonel Parks contented himself with stating facts leaving the result to his own mind. Anne had faith that its final decision would be the right one.

Colonel Parks was too honorable also to seek to corrupt the integrity of his young friend by drawing from him information that might be useful to Washington, and Neal was too faithful, while he remained in the service of the king, to betray the trust reposed in him.

The visits of Neal to the house of the provincial were made always by night, and with caution; for he did not like the ridicule of the officers, and he feared, too, that his motive might be misinterpreted to the injury of the fair girl's good name. He also did not like to give occasion for any suspicion to be fastened upon his loyalty. The withdrawal of the sentry favored the secrecy of his visits. Colonel Parks was not blind to the attachment of the young aid-de-camp to his niece; nor that it was reciprocated by her. But he had no fears of the integrity of the young man, for whom he himself had conceived a strong affection.

Affairs remained in this condition up to the stormy evening on which we accompany him on his usual visit to the house of the venerable provincial.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE MESSENGER FROM THE REBEL CAMP.

BEFORE Neal could decide what sort of a reply to make to the searching question of the old Provincial Colonel, the door of an inner room opened and Anne Parks came in. She smiled but blushed also as she gave her hand to Neal, who rose and approached her with ardent affection beaming in his fine countenance. Our hero's cheek reflected the hue of her own, as he pressed her small, warm hand in his, and led her to the vacant seat.

"You were sitting here at your embroidery, Anne," said he, tenderly, "and ran away when I knocked. Did you think I was a stranger? Have you forgotten my rap?" and he smiled in her eye, and she looked down as she replied:

"No, but ——" Here she hesitated and took up her work.

"But she did not think she was in trim to see you, I suspect," said her uncle; "for I see that she has not on the same dress that——"

"Dear uncle——"

"Well, I won't expose you, child?"

"I think you have done so already," she answered laughingly.

"I am sorry you should make a stranger of me more than you would of your brother," said Neal. "Have you heard from him of late?"

"Not for two weeks. I am very anxious to learn if he is well?"

"If he had been ill you would have heard from him."

"Perhaps not," said Colonel Parks; "besides communication is now nearly impossible, both sides observe such vigilance. But I trust he is well, and serving his country faithfully."

The old gentleman then took his pipe in his hand, as if he learned from experience, that Neal had no ear for him while Anne was by; and saying he believed he would go into his bed-room and smoke, he rose and left the lovers together.

Neal looked very well pleased, and taking up Anne's hand he pressed it to his lips: and then would have drawn her towards him with his arm about her slender waist when she reservedly drew back.

"Why, Anne! This is not usual!" he exclaimed, hurt.

"I have been thinking, Neal,——"

And she hesitated, and in trying to take a stitch in her work pricked her finger with her needle.

"What have you been thinking, dear Anne?"

"That we ought not to be so intimate."

"Do you not love me, then?"

"I will not unsay what I have said!" she said, quietly.

"Then you really love me! If so, why shrink from me, as you did at this moment?"

"I have thought——"

"Thought! I wish you would let your thoughts alone, Anne, if they are to grieve me in this way."

"I do not wish to grieve you, Neal, indeed, I do not," she said earnestly. "But we ought not to see each other any more! You do not now come here to converse with my uncle but to sit with me!"

"And do you not like it? Does it displease you?"

"Oh, no! But I know it will end in making us both very unhappy."

"Why? How, dearest Anne?"

"I will deal frankly, Neal," said the beautiful provincial maiden elevating her deep blue eyes to his face, beaming with an expression full of sincerity and devotion; "we are both very much attached to each other. Each day will strengthen it in both our hearts! In a few weeks General Howe will depart or surrender, my uncle thinks, and then we must separate, you to go to England or perhaps to prison, and I shall be left in tears and——"

Here her voice trembled and her eyes filled with glittering drops.

"Why should we separate?" he said with warmth. "I will



not go to England! I will not leave you! If I go to England by and by you shall accompany me as your bride! Nay—look not so coldly. Have I not breathed before to thee this sweet word—this delightful thought? Why this grave look that you wear?”

“It is because I can never be yours, Neal, that I look grave—that I have said our intimacy should cease?”

“And why shall you not be mine? I am young—but in less than a year I shall be of age, and inherit a fortune left me by my aunt. You shall live with me in England, and—”

“I can never live in the land of my country’s oppressors!” she said firmly, yet with a cheek very pale.

Neal started with surprise. He regarded her for a moment with looks of sadness.

“Yes, it is the land of oppression to you, Anne! You speak truly! England is unjust. But there will be peace by and by. Then your objection will be removed.”

“I cannot be the bride of one who now, there is war, is in arms on the side of my country’s oppressors?”

“Anne! are you in earnest?”

“Do you wish me to repeat my words, Neal?”

“No. They are ringing now in my ears! Is this decision the result of what you have been thinking upon?”

“Yes.”

“And you are firm?”

“Neal: strongly as my heart is linked to you, I would break it ere I would become your wife while you are in arms against the land of my birth. I should be unworthy to be called an American woman should I forget my country in myself, Neal.”

“It is a noble sentiment, Anne! A cause must prosper that inspires such a spirit throughout all classes without distinction of age or sex as this which you love so warmly. From this hour, Anne, I cease to serve the King!” he added, with decision. “I will to-morrow tender my resignation to General Howe, and to Admiral Shuldham. I confess that I ought not to continue in arms with the opinions I entertain, and which I have learned from you uncle and you! I will frankly confess to my uncle my objection to serving longer, and then, free as the bird that hastens from the storm cloud to its nest, will I fly to you. I have been offended by my uncle to-night, and I owe him little gratitude. To-morrow I will resign and come hither and lay my sword at your feet.”

“Are you sincere? Can I believe this, Neal?” asked the young girl with cheeks glowing with pleasure, and her eyes sparkling with delighted hope.

“For your sake, I will to-morrow cease to sanction this war of oppression, by attaching myself to its leaders. You shall then be mine. I will sail with you and my mother to France, and there remain until peace is restored, and then return to England.”

“Neal, are you of England—are you English born, that you must think only of that proud and wicked land! You as well as I are American born. Boston is your native town—New England your native land. What have you to do with England but to resist her oppression of your country? You have not done enough when you only resign? You have not done what is due to yourself, Neal, when you only cease to serve the tyrant?”

“What could you have me do more, Anne? Turn traitor and take up arms against the king?”

“Is there any alteration for a brave man who has arrived to a true knowledge of his country’s wrongs? Your reward is due to America! Your arms, your voice, your influence, your country most sacredly claims! You have been a traitor, Neal, to her not to be so to England. Have I not heard you speak with pleasure of your boyhood, and nay, have I not heard you express your happiness that you were born where I was? What is there that attaches me to New England that does not equally bind you? What is there that makes me an American—a patriot, that does not make you the same? Throw off this blind prejudice, which, like a veil obscures the true nobility of your soul, Neal, and from this hour give to your country your sword, and, if need is your life. You are convinced of the oppression and tyranny of the king and of the injustice of his cause. What more should you do to bear testimony to the sense of her injustice by aiding your oppressed countrymen to

resist it. Do not foreigners, from love of liberty and hatred of oppression, flock to our standard! and lay down their lives upon a soil far more their own! What higher motive have you who—”

“Enough—enough, dearest Anne,” exclaimed Neal, kneeling on one knee by the side of the eloquent girl, who, inspired by patriotic love for her country and her solicitude for her honor of him whom she so devotedly loved; “you have prevailed. I feel as if I had just awakened from a lethargy! You are right! I have been a traitor to my country! I will return for allegiance. From this hour I am an American.”

The ardent and joyful girl could not restrain the tears that rushed to her eyes. She suffered him to press her to his heart unresistingly.

“Now, Neal, I am happy. Oh, how I have longed to make this appeal to you; but I have refrained, not wishing to influence you, lest I might be actuated in doing so, by selfish rather than by higher motives which ought to govern me. But you have made me happy. You will now be joined hand in hand with my noble brother instead of against him, and—”

“And with the sister heart and hand instead of separating from her,” continued Neal, with a smile. “I have been, it seems, willfully blind, I never can be too grateful to you, Anne, for teaching me my duty. I am an American. I will prove myself to be one.”

At this moment the hall door softly opened, and a man enveloped in snow from head to foot entered, and stood gazing upon them with an air of hesitation and wariness, as if doubtful, whether to advance or retreat. At first his complexion could not be made out for the snow that lay on his cheeks, but as it was rapidly dissolving it displayed shortly the glossy hue of an Ethiopian.

“It is Jesse!” cried Anne, springing from her chair and running towards him.

“Who can ‘Jesse’ be?” thought Neal, as he surveyed the tall, ungainly shape of the negro.

“Jesse! bless us, is Jesse here?” cried the old officer coming in with his pipe in one hand and his red night-cap in the other.

## CHAPTER X.

### NEAL BECOMES A REBEL.

“How have you got into town Jesse?” inquired Anne, as she untied a large muffler that enveloped “Jesse’s” neck.

“And where is Frederick?” asked the Colonel, as he pushed the old negro into his own arm chair.

“Is he well, and why have you come, and in such a storm? What can have made you venture to try and see us through so many dangers?”

“Why, Miss Anny, and master,” answered Jesse, after having taken off his fur cap, displaying a head as grey with age as his coat collar was with snow, “it a mos’ impossible for de poor nigger answer sich a sight o’ questions all at onct. Ise glad I got her safe tho’ and bress de lord I finds you both safe and well.”

“Where did you leave my brother?” asked Anne. “This, Neal,” she added observing his look of curiosity, “this is our old servant who accompanied Frederick in his escape, from the town five months ago, when he went to join Washington. We have not seen him since then; and so you will not be longer surprised at our reception of him. Where is Frederick? is he well, and did he send you?”

“I werry sorry, missis, but young master ant werry well,” responded the old man shaking his head sadly.

“Sick? my dear brother ill?”

“Is my boy hurt—is he wounded?”

“Yes, master, that is it! You see yesterday dere was a boat full o’ valuable perwisions and arms goin’ to the Merikan army from below when de wind blow contrary and drive de boat ober on to de flat on dis side; and when de English see it dey start a hundred red coat from deir lines to take it.

“Master Frederick he vos ridin’ with about twenty horse along the shore goin’ to relieve a post, when he sees the perdition of the boat and gives the command to his men to keep the English from gettin’ it. So they galloped on for more than a mile as fast as they could spur and reaches the boat first.



But the English comed up and attack 'em, but master Frederick had so much fight in him he sarved 'em so they run'd away and then he got the boat safe; but he was shot bad in the side and in the forehead, though he didn't mind it till he got the boat clear, but there was five o' the English killed and seventeen wounded, and this was satisfaction to me and master Edward wy he and I was the only one's hit on our side!"

"I heard of the exploit, but didn't know that the cavalry officer who executed it was my nephew," said the old soldier, with a tone of pride, while tears glistened in his eyes.

"Oh, tell me, Jesse, is he badly hurt?" cried Anne, pale with sisterly alarm.

"Why, pretty bad, misses! He can't set up, and his head pains him werry hard. The doctor distract one ball from his side and half a ball from his forehead, coz you see that the bone split it. But he ant in no danger! He only told me to try and get into the town and tell you 'xactly how he was, so you mustn't be alarmed: for he was 'fraid you might hear he was killed out and out!"

"Then he is in no present danger, good Jesse?" asked the Colonel.

"No, master! he ony have good deal pain!"

"And do you say you were in the skirmish?"

"Yes, master! I always go where young master goes!"

"And where were you wounded? not badly, I hope!" said the Colonel with concern.

"Not much, massa. I only got a shot in lef' arm. Its only a flesh wound! Doctor sew it up, and nigger good as new!"

"Are you sure you are not much hurt, Jesse?" inquired Anne, with beautiful solicitude, for the moment forgetting her brother in her grateful interest in the fate of his faithful servant.

"Not a bit! De doctor cut him bullet out clean, and dere he is," he added, taking the leaden bullet out of his pocket and exhibiting to them. "I keep him, master, coz I mean to send him back again to 'em afore a week!"

"And how did you get in so safely, brave Jesse, with all the avenues so vigilently kept?" asked Neal.

Jesse surveyed the speaker a moment, and discovering the English uniform he started back, as if he had for the first time noticed him.

"Bress me, ant this a enemy, master?"

"No, Jesse. He is an American and a true friend of the cause," answered Anne, with a tone of pride.

"Has he, indeed, become one of us, Anne?" asked Colonel Park with a glow of pleasure.

"Yes, sir; I am not worthy of the land of my birth," answered Neal firmly. "I have seen that the officer who feels the injustice of England has something more to do than resign and return home! especially if he be by birth an American. My decision is made. I resign to-morrow and the sword I withdraw from tyranny I consecrate to liberty!"

The old Provincial officer made no reply; but he went up and embraced him and called him affectionately "his son!"

"Come and kiss him girl!" he said to Anne. "He deserves this!"

Anne did not obey. Perhaps she thought Neal had already taken his reward! she blushed deeply and looked very happy. But the next instant the situation of her brother filled all her thoughts.

"If this young gemman be a true friend then I answers his questions," said Jesse. "I lef' the camp just afore dark and made for the lines. I know'd the snow and dark would help me, and so I walk on fast. When I got near the lines it was dark as pitch and the snow as thick as feathers. So I kept along till I come to the first sentry. But he did'nt see me for the snow—and taking care of his own eyes and I went by him within two rods. In dis way I passed 'em all but de last one when I step on a stick which crack and he look and see me. But afore he could fire I caught him by de freat and fling him down and stuff his mouth full o' snow, keep him from hollerin' and dere leave him arter I'd taken his gun. And when I lef' him I advise him to go over to the rebels for if General Howe knew he'd lost his musket he'd have him shot. He got rite

up and went strait as I advise, like a wise man!—The rest o' the way I got here easy enuff. I stood my musket up in the back entry coz I crept in the house that way!"

"You have done bravely, Jesse," said Colonel Park. "Now relieve Anne's anxiety who fears you have not told all the truth about her brother! Is your young master in any danger?"

"Wall, to tell the truth his situation is pretty bad."

"Did he not tell you to represent his case as lightly as possible?" asked Anne.

"That is just his words, Miss Anna."

"He must be dangerously wounded, uncle! Oh, that I was with him. In the camp and without proper attention he will suffer—perhaps die! I might save his life. Where is he, Jesse? Where did you leave him?"

"At General Washington's own quarters. The General had him removed there."

"Then he must be very ill to call for such attention. Jesse, do you intend to return to-night?"

"Yes, misses, I mean to go rite back."

"Then I will accompany you."

"You, Anne!" exclaimed her uncle and Neal in the same breath.

"I must see my brother. I must be near him in his illness! I will brave every danger. Is he not wounded in the service, of his country! What can woman do less than devote herself to those who bleed for this struggling land. What can a sister do but watch by a brother's couch? I am resolved, uncle! I will go out of the city with Jesse! If he can risk his life for Frederick, shall not I?"

"Nothing is impossible to resolute affection and sacred duty."

"The fatigue," said Neal.

"I shall not feel it!"

"The peril—"

"Shall I fear anything that I may reach my wounded brother's side? Jesse, refresh yourself, and in an hour I will be ready to go with you."

"If this is your determination, Anne," said Neal, "I will go also. I shall thus prove to you the sincerity of my conversion!"

## CHAPTER XI.

### IN WASHINGTON'S TENT.

THE limits of our story will not permit us to accompany the party, composed of Neal, Anne and the faithful black, each step of their progress on their dangerous enterprise. Favored by the storm and darkness and by the direction of the sentry whom Jesse had disarmed, they passed the outposts and reached the American lines in safety. Neal's British uniform was concealed by his seaman's jacket, in which he had enveloped himself. Anne was protected by a cloak and furs, and bravely stood the fatigue of the three miles walk which intervened between the outposts of the British garrison and centre of the American camp at Cambridge.

Jesse proved an excellent guide; and always having ready pass-word and countersign which challenged, in two hours after leaving her uncle's house within the besieged town, Anne was in front of the quarters occupied by General Washington.

Neal's feelings were sufficiently novel at finding himself in the American camp, and about to be ushered within the presence of the Commander-in-chief of the army opposed to that commanded by his uncle and to which he had hitherto owed service and allegiance. But he did not hesitate. He had no feeling of regret. He had become fully alive to the course of duty: and if duty and honor did not point him to serve the American cause, love for the fair girl resting upon his arm undisputably did so.

The hour was near midnight; but light was visible in several of the windows as, after passing the sentry, Jesse knocked at the door. It was opened by a black footman who, recognising Jesse, threw wide the door, and admitted them.



"How is Master Frederick?" asked Jesse in a low tone.

"About as he was when you left him, but some little more fever. He has asked after you a good many times."

"Miss Anne, you and young master Neal stop here in the hall a bit: and I'll just go up and tell him you are here and all about it, so he needn't be took by surprise."

The hall in which Jesse left them plainly enough indicated the military occupation of the house. Swords, and belts, chapeaus and pistols, were hanging from pegs around the walls, or strewn on the tables and settees. Military uniforms and camp-coats lay about, and the place had that air of negligence which a common hall might be supposed to wear after midnight when all had retired.

"Which is General Washington's apartment?" asked Neal of the footman.

"That front one," he answered, pointing to a door on their left. "It is his sleeping and eating room. The other rooms are occupied by his staff, and one by young Captain Parks who was wounded yesterday in rescuing a barge from the enemy."

"Was he badly wounded?" asked Anne, tremblingly.

"He received a spent ball in his forehead, and was severely wounded in the side; but the doctor thinks he may live."

"May live? Then is his danger imminent. I can never be too thankful, Neal, that I have come."

"I fear your fatigue and exposure will endanger your own life, dear Anne."

"No! I can never suffer from what I have this night done. Here comes Jesse."

"Come up, Miss Anne! Master Frederick is told you is here. He wants to see you."

Anne flew up the stairs, but Neal followed at her side.

"I will not go in at present, Anne. I would you should first let him know who I am. I hope you will find him better than you hope for."

The reception of Anne by her brother was very affecting. He blamed her for adventuring so much, but expressed his gratitude in the same words, that he was without pain, though he had been severely wounded.

"Is there no danger of your dying, my dear brother?" she asked with solicitude.

"None! The wounds are not mortal. But the doctor says I must be kept quiet; and that everything depends on good nursing for a week or two. I am glad you are here. You were very kind and brave to come. And how you have changed. You are paler yet lovelier than when we parted six months ago. Are you not wearied with your walk?"

"Neal and Jesse carried me in their arms a great part of the way."

"Noble Jesse! And who is this Neal, sister, that has risked danger with you? Jesse says he is a young English officer. Can it be possible?"

In a few words, with hesitation and blushing that betrayed to her brother the secret of her heart, she told him who he was; beginning with her first seeing him when he rebuked the insolence of the sentry, up to the present evening.

"The nephew of General Howe! and an American by birth! Educated in England and attached to its naval service; and now an aid of the English General. I have heard of him! I trust he is all you say he is; and that his conversion is sincere!"

"It is, brother! you have evidence of it in his being now in the American camp!"

"Let me be made known to him! Nay, don't object. I shan't talk too much. I wish to see him, and thank him! I wish Washington also to know him!"

Neal was in a moment or two afterwards introduced by Anne to her brother. The two young men met with frankness and mutual prepossession one for each other. In a few minutes they conversed together like long known friends. Neal freely discussed the change in his views and feelings, and spoke of his intention to join the American army so soon as he should resign his present position.

"Resign!" exclaimed Frederic.

"Yes. I intend to return to the city before dawn and seeking an interview with my uncle, freely and openly explain to him my intention no longer to bear arms against my native country. I might now remain with your army," he added, "but I do not wish to take the step I contemplate in a clandestine way. I will resign in person into my uncle's hands the trust I received at them, and returning to Admiral Shuldham my commission, will again see you!"

It was in vain that both urged him to stay while he was in safety. In vain Anne held out to him the probability that his uncle would place him under arrest as a traitor, or hold him in prison as a rebel. Neal's high sense of honor was superior even to the wishes and tears of Anne: and after remaining two hours with them he took his leave, promising soon to return.

The storm which still raged favored his entrance into the city. The morning found him early in his uncle's presence, which he had sought with the merely patriotic determination to resign his position and explain to him his reasons for so doing. But the time happened to be rife with excitement on account of a rumor that the citizen rebels had formed a plan to fire the town and then compel the garrison to leave the place.

## CHAPTER XII.

### A CLEVER STRATAGEM.

A gay captain of the Light Hussars came dashing along the street until he alighted before the head-quarters of the commander-in-chief, and he must have been in great favor with the General, for he carelessly threw his rein over the neck of his powerful charger, and, after giving a few orders to his attendant, he passed the sentinel, who stood at the door at the foot of the stairs. An orderly met him in the waiting-room, who, upon seeing the captain, politely accosted him:

"The General is most anxious to see you, Captain Sparks; and requested me to admit you to his presence immediately upon your arrival." He then ushered in the officer to the presence of the stately commander of his majesty's forces in the colonies, who greeted the captain with a hearty shake of the hand, "come, tell us your hair-breadth escapes from rebel ropes and soldiers; and what about this man Washington?"

"I penetrated into the very center of their camp in disguise as barber and dentist, and left in the same dress."

The General smiled, and jocosely remarked:—"The foul breath from the traitorous throats of these rebels had more to do with those decayed pledges of your success, than the choice quality of their food. You saw Washington, then?"

"Yes," replied the captain, depositing the teeth with the greatest care in his breast-pocket; "and in perfect health and surrounded by as determined a staff as any rebel chieftain would wish to gaze upon."

"Good subjects for the hangman."

"They do not think so, General," replied the captain. "The men appeared warmly clad and contented, and appeared to possess the most abiding confidence in the wisdom and ability of the arch traitor, who is really a commanding personage, and, saving your presence, equal to any chieftain of past history, so faithfully described by novelists."

"The truth is, Captain," said the General, in a modulated tone of voice, "I am not at all satisfied with our present condition. The army must be fed and we cannot long protect the shipping. And though Admiral Shuldham is desirous for me to immediately attack—but of what avail—only the loss of my brave grenadiers without ultimate profit."

"Then you intend to evacuate and move to the South?"

"I am not prepared to give an answer. But of their force, as near as you could guess."

"Between twelve or fifteen thousand, I should surmise, and daily increasing." And then, after particularly describing the character of the troops and the number of cannon, he added: "It will be necessary, General, for you to observe the



strictest vigilance over your nephew. He is already suspected by several of the staff. In other words he is in love, and the tender passion is all powerful."

"I will see him," replied the General, evidently amazed by the captain's remark.

"I think he would do better by attending to the rigging of his ship, and making love to the mermaids in the harbor," and the Captain coughed, as he bowed himself out at the door but the General wore a serious aspect, and remarked, "Pray do me the service to mark his road and discover through whose influence he is being led astray."

General Howe was surrounded with officers and messengers, and Neal postponed his purpose till another time. He then went privately to inform Colonel Parks of the success of Anne's escape and the condition of his nephew. He at the same time laid before him his intentions. The Colonel tried to prevail upon him to give up this "Quixotic idea," as he termed it, assuring him that Howe would put him under arrest.

Neal promised to think upon it; but Colonel Parks would take no delay of decision, and Neal finally consented to depart, leaving a letter behind to his uncle explaining his motives. The letter was written and Neal was about to take his final departure under cover of the darkness, and had walked to the mansion of Colonel Parks to bid him adieu, when he found the house in the possession of a guard of soldiers. On inquiring, he learned that the old soldier had been arrested on suspicion of communicating with the enemy.

Angry, grieved and surprised at this intelligence, Neal felt, nevertheless, that if he wished to serve him effectually he must act with caution and secrecy.

He, at length, learned that Jesse had been followed from the lines by a tory who was skulking about seeking for plunder, and who saw him cross them, disarming the soldier and proceed to the house of Colonel Parks, and, that afterwards saw three persons leave it, whom he followed, and saw pass the post into the country. This account confirmed by the absence of the run-a-way sentry, had led to the arrest of the venerable patriot.

Until he should effect his release, Neal resolved to be silent respecting his change of opinion for he knew that if his uncle knew that he was a friend to the rebels his opportunity for aiding the father of Anne would be lost. With some management he succeeded in getting an interview with the Colonel in prison to whom he made known his purpose of effecting his release, either by entreaty or stratagem.

It was several days before Neal became fully satisfied that it was his uncle's intention to keep the old soldier a close prisoner in spite of all his efforts in his behalf; and of the petitions of the American citizens in the town for his liberation.

Three nights of this period of imprisonment, Neal had passed in the American camp, whither, having the pass of the garrison, he went without any difficulty. With Anne and her brother he here discussed plans for the release of the prisoner; and returned to town before morning to try and carry them into execution. But all his schemes failed from the fact that the guard over the prisoner was unusually strict; and that his apartment was changed every night, lest there should be an attempt made to aid his escape, for General Howe was aware that the citizens were highly indignant at the arrest of the venerable soldier and patriot whom they believed was innocent of the charge brought against him.

Affairs were in this situation when the English General ordered Neal, who still held his post near him in the hope of yet aiding the prisoner by his presence, to summon the selectmen of the town to a consultation.

The assembling of the rulers of the city, and the conference between them and Sir William Howe has already been made known, with the subsequent truce and evacuation of the town by the enemy.

Having now brought up our story to the evening of Neal's departure from General Howe's head-quarters to summon the Selectmen to wait upon him, we will now follow him in his farther adventures. We have now seen that his uncle's sus-

pitions were not without good ground; and that if he had been cognizant of what is known to the reader, instead of sending his nephew on a mission to the Selectmen he would have sent him under guard to prison.

Neal delivered his several messages to the members of the corporation, and then, from the town hall, took his way rapidly in the direction of the prison where Colonel Parks was confined. Although he had in no one act betrayed Sir William Howe's confidence in him by giving the information he might have done to Washington concerning the garrison, he now resolved, since he saw that his uncle had suspicions of his loyalty, to use the power his position near him gave him to see the prisoner, and boldly effect his release. The evening before when he parted from Anne in his brother's room, he had pledged himself that he would not cross the lines again but in company with her uncle. He now resolved to redeem this pledge.

"Who is on guard to-night?" he asked of a sergeant who stood in front of the prison.

"I am with my men."

"Then my business is with you, Murray."

"What is your wish, sir?"

"The prisoner, Colonel Parks, I wish brought out privately and escorted to Head Quarters. Yourself and four men will serve a sufficient detachment."

The sergeant did not hesitate to obey an order brought by the nephew of the General. He led the way to the prison and showed Neal into the apartment where the old soldier was confined.

"Orders, sir, to march under guard to Head Quarters," said the sergeant in a formal tone. "Get ready to leave."

On seeing Neal, Colonel Parks was about to express his pleasure, when the young man placed his forefinger on his lip, with a look of caution.

"Sergeant, I will assist the prisoner in getting his overcoat on, while you draw out your men," and the sergeant retired along the gloomy corridor of the prison.

"Now, my friend, I am about to restore you to liberty and to your family," said Neal, quickly. "I have done all I can to effect your release by an honorable discharge; but in vain. Within three days the garrison will withdraw from the town and I fear you may be conveyed on board one of the ships and there held a prisoner till you can be exchanged. I'm also suspected and may share your fate. The sergeant will escort you to the Head Quarters of Sir William Howe. All you have to do is to follow me and I will conduct you to your niece."

The sergeant soon returned to receive the prisoner, and escorted by four soldiers the prisoner left leaning on Neal's arm. The night was dark but clear, and the hour about half-past seven. The escort took his way through Common street into Beacon and so up to the Head Quarters of the General. They halted at the foot of the steep flight of steps where stood a sentry.

"Halt, here, sergeant with your prisoner till I return to you," said Neal.

He then ascended to the door and entered the hall with a bold, free tread. He learned from a servant that his uncle was already in conference with the Selectmen.

"Then all is as I expected it would be. The way will be free," he said, with animation. He was about to return to the sergeant: when his mother, seeing him, approached from the extremity of the hall.

"Neal, I am glad you are returned. I would speak with you."

"Well, mother."

"This is no place. Come into my room."

"I am somewhat engaged. But I will give you a moment here, mother."

"Do you know your uncle suspects you of being disloyal to the king's cause?"

"Yes; he told me as much. But my uncle's suspicions are not confirmed."

"I do not like your tone, Neal. If I thought you were false



to your country I would be the first to cry out for your arrest."

"I am false to my country only when I take sides with its oppressors, mother," said Neal, evasively. "What have you more to say, dear mother?"

"To caution you. If you are getting rebel notions, banish them. You are in danger. My brother will not spare even you."

"Mother, why should I *not* be a rebel?" he said with a smile. "Is not America my birth-place? Did not England drive you and my father to these shores? What harm or wonder would there be if I should be a little rebellious? But here is a packet for you, which I wish you to read, dear mother. I have another, something similar, for my uncle. Good night. I shall soon see you again."

Thus speaking, he pressed her hand, and hurriedly descended the steps to where he had left the sergeant with the prisoner.

"Sergeant, the General is at this moment engaged in council. You will march your prisoner up the yard by the wall, and so to the side door."

The sergeant obeyed, and halted his men at a door that led from the carriage yard up to the kitchen.

"You will wait here with your men till the prisoner returns," he said. "Follow me, sir," he added sternly to the prisoner.

He entered the door and ascended a steep, winding stair-way closely followed by the Colonel. At the landing he turned to the right, and traversing a narrow passage, opened a door at its extremity, which led into the garden.

"Now, my dear sir, lean on me and move on as quickly as possible," said Neal, giving him his arm.

He rapidly crossed the lower parterre and then ascending the steps of the terrace to the summer-house, passed it, and crossing the elevated summit of the garden, descended by a steep path on the farther side which terminated in a gate. They passed through this, and entered a lane which led towards the water-side on the west of the town.

"Now, my dear friend," said Neal, "we are almost in security. You can understand now that the order to march you from prison to the head-quarters was a ruse to deceive the sergeant, and get you from his power. In five minutes more, if all is as I hope for, we shall be beyond pursuit."

"But there is little probability that my uncle will end his conference under an hour, and during that time the sergeant and his men will not discover the deception I have practised on them."

"Noble young man! I know not how to thank you for your interest in my behalf."

"I am fully rewarded in your liberty, sir," answered Neal, who also thought of the sweet reward he should be sure to obtain from her whom he loved better than life.

In ten minutes after leaving the garden gate, they came to the water-side, at a point where a ravine penetrated the land for some rods. Here Neal stopped and listened. As he did so he heard on one side, and on the other of him, the cries of the sentinels that guarded the beach of "All is well," sound answering to sound, for many a winding mile of the guarded shore. He could also hear it from the American side coming faintly and far-disant over the water. After all was still, he took up a stone and threw it far out into the dark water. After a pause, long enough to count fifty, he cast another. A third after a similar interval, followed, each striking sharp into the wave, like the light splash of a small fish springing into the air and falling back again. The fall of the last stone was answered by three low splashes upon the water, not many yards off; but in the darkness nothing was visible.

"The cry of 'all's well' has alarmed the fish, Bill," said one sentry calling to another.

"Yes, they seem to be quite lively to-night. But when one wants to catch one to keep from starving, they are as scarce as guineas in a canteen."

"I am glad they are gossiping to one another," said Neal. "Now step softly, sir. The breaking of a dry stick would betray us."

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE ESCAPE.

NEAL took the old patriot by the hand and led him with caution along the bottom of the ravine and following it about twelve yards they came to its outlet. Here they stopped and Neal looked abroad upon the waters and listened. The next moment he saw a boat appear close at hand and moving with noiseless celerity. It touched the shore. The faint outline of a single human figure was perceptible in the bow.

"Jesse!" whispered Neal.

"Master Nelson!" answered the negro in the same cautious tone. "I glad you here. Is dat old massa?"

"Yes. Push your boat round so he can step into the stern. Be cautious for there are enemies close at hand."

"I know it. I have been layin' off here two hour and hear 'em talk. Bless you old massa! Miss Anny be mighty glad to see you."

"Hist, Jesse," said Neal warningly.

The old man stepped by his aid into the skiff, and Neal springing in Jesse pushed it noiselessly from the bank and shot out into the bay. Not a word was spoken for some minutes. Neal sat watching anxiously the shore and Jesse plied the paddle with perseverance and skill.

Gradually the confused sounds of the town grew less and less distinguishable and the lights of the American camp increased in size.

"Now, Colonel," said Neal, taking his hand in his and pressing it warmly, "now, sir, you are free. We are beyond pursuit. Our escape has been undiscovered."

"Thanks. Blessings on your head!" answered the grateful American.

"Massa, let Jesse shake hands with you too."

"Yes, Jesse, I shall never forget you. But is it you were waiting there?"

"That is my plan," answered Neal. "For five nights Jesse has been waiting in this skiff off that inlet. Only to-night has he been successful with taking you on board. I arranged that he should come, for I did not know what might occur, and I wanted some means of getting you to the main land knowing you could not well stand the land route by the rock. The signal which you heard us exchange I also arranged with Jesse. Too much praise cannot be bestowed upon him for his faithful watching and his skill and caution in bringing the plan to a successful termination. I resolved, sir, a week ago, that if you were not released by the General I would release you though at the expense of the confidence he placed in me."

"If you are a true born American and really love your country and feel for her wrongs now that you know them, you have broken no faith! you have done nothing but what in war is declared lawful and honorable."

"I do not feel any regret; I have well weighed the result. I only wish my mother was with me in the cause I have now espoused."

"She is a strong partizan of the royal side."

"Yes. But I have written and left with her a letter in which I have gone over the whole ground of my change of opinions with all its probable arguments. I have told her that if she is convinced that England is wrong and America right she will remain in the city when the garrison is withdrawn; for, sir, not many hours hence Sir William will retire if he can do so unmolested, on board the shipping."

"This is an event devoutly to be wished."

"I know that this is his purpose. So I have left it with my mother either to remove and be with me or to depart with her. I have told her if she proposes going to England I will visit her after the war is ended. I trust she will, however, and cast in her lot with mine."

The boat at length arrived on the patriot side of the Back Bay and the party landed: Jesse drawing the skiff up high on shore and concealing it under some bushes that overhung the bank. Conducted by Neal, the escaped prisoner then took his way in the direction of the American camp, at which all



three arrived about ten o'clock, two and a half hours after leaving the sergeant and his men standing guard before the side door at the head quarters of the English General.

On the departure of the Selectmen from the presence of Sir William Howe after their conference, a rap at his door called his attention from the deer meditation into which he had fallen upon the fearful crisis of affairs.

"Come in!" he answered, and advancing a step towards the door as if anticipating who it was,

"Ah, you are returned," he said to the person he had ordered to follow Neal.

"Yes, Sir William."

"And what is the result? Where went he?"

"To summon the Selectmen."

"That I know. Where afterwards?"

"To the prison."

"Did he go in?"

"Yes, Sir William. But he shortly after came forth again and brought the prisoner here, as you ordered."

"As I ordered. What prisoner?"

"Why, I learned from the guard whom I questioned while he was in, that he had gone there by an order from you to escort the old rebel Colonel to you."

"This did you hear?"

"Yes, Sir William. And I waited till Mr. Nelson came out again with the prisoner; and then I followed him and the Sergeant and four men at a distance."

"Do you mean to say that a Sergeant and four men accompanied Neal and the prisoner from the prison?"

"Yes, Sir William."

"This is strange and unaccountable. Where did they go?"

"Have you not seen them?"

"Seen who?"

"The prisoner and Mr. Nelson."

"No!"

"I followed them hither to head-quarters."

Neal left his prisoner and guard at the front gate and came into the house. In a few minutes he returned, and I heard him say that you were engaged in council, and for the present the prisoner must await your leisure in a rear room of the house. So he ordered the guard round to the east door and there they remain supposing that the prisoner was with you, as certainly I did, for I saw them ascend the stairs together, as I supposed, to the ante-room. If I have been in error, sir, I could not help it; for I supposed that you had sent for the prisoner, and that Mr. Nelson was acting under your instructions. I thought you only wished me to follow him while he was abroad; not in your own house."

Sir William Howe stood for a few moments over-powered with surprise. At length he said:

"Is the Sergeant at the door?"

"Yes, Sir William."

"Send him to me."

From this man the British General learned the ruse Neal had practised to get possession of the prisoner. Instant search was made throughout the house and gardens, but he could not be discovered, neither he nor the prisoner. Sir William Howe then gave orders to have every avenue strictly guarded, and patrols were sent in every direction to intercept the fugitives in their escape.

After he had given his orders, and was pacing up and down the room, thinking of Neal's defection, the door opened and Madame Nelson, his sister, entered with a face flashed with angry emotion.

"Neal has gone over to the rebels, brother."

"I know it."

"Here is a letter stating his reasons for doing so. I want you to read it. Perhaps you will not censure him so severely when you bear in mind that he is a native of the country."

"Ah! are you, too, about to prove disloyal?"

"No; but Neal's arguments are very forcible. I never before viewed this contest in the light he represents it."

"Sir William, here is a package for you," said a servant, entering.

The English General took it, and, glancing at the address, said, with angry surprise:

"It is the young traitor's handwriting! Does he address me, too, seeking to make a rebel of me?"

Without further words, his uncle broke the seal, and sat down to peruse the letter which Neal had left for him. When he had ended it, he took up that written to his mother, and read that also to the end.

"Well, the boy is a thorough faced rebel, bone and blood. The rogue reasons well, and would, I dare say, convince any man but an Englishman that we are unjust and tyrannical, and the cause of the revolt is a sacred one. There is no doubt but that he has escaped with Colonel Parks to the rebel army. If so, I am sorry; for I hoped much from him. But if he attaches himself to this cause, which he loftily styles 'his country's,' he will fall with it, and all his hopes in life ruined forever. The Colonists, though we are now somewhat closely pressed by them, must eventually yield submission to the royal arms, and then infamy will follow all those visionary and romantic gentlemen who have deserted the king for the standard of revolt."

The next day the English General as has been already seen, was too much occupied with arranging for the secure retreat of his garrison to think much of Neal. His mother, partly influenced by his arguments, but mainly governed by maternal feelings, resolved to remain behind; which in the confusion of the evacuation she was enabled to do, without drawing the attention of her brother to the fact until he was already embarked and missed her on board. The departure of the fleet for Halifax we have already mentioned, with the repossession of the town by the Patriots. Neal, our hero, we have also seen enter riding among the young officers composing the staff of Washington.

He had been presented to Washington in Frederick's chamber several evenings before, and when he reached his quarters with Colonel Parks, this gentleman so warmly spoke in his praise, relating his history, that Washington at once appointed him to a position near his person, the same which Frederick had occupied before he was wounded. In Boston he found his mother, and embraced her with joyful emotions.

Having thus brought our hero to honor and credit among his own countrymen, and to favor with Washington, we need not assure the reader that Anne had become the happiest maiden in all the land. Her brother was rapidly recovering, and a warm friendship had sprung up between him and Neal. He sanctioned her heart's choice of the noble young seaman, and her uncle had given her his consent to the union with his young friend so soon as the war should terminate; "for," said he, "the camp is no place for bridal." As there seemed a prospect, from the present aspect of affairs, that the war would speedily be brought to an end, the lovers were not impatient so long as they could see each other daily.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### TO PROVE HIS LOYALTY.

The face of things after the entrance of the American army into Boston, began to wear a different aspect. The ruined and dismantled houses were repaired; churches desecrated to riding circuses for cavalry, and to the use of barracks, were restored; the town was open to the country people; and the markets were once more filled with abundance. Preparations were at once made for fortifying the harbor, and making it defensive in case the enemy should attempt to re-occupy the town with a fresh army.

Cannon, muskets and ball were now plenty among the Americans, but there was no powder. If forts were built and redoubts armed, there was no powder to render them of service in case of an attack. This deficiency, so serious, was irremediable. There was no manufactory of gunpowder then established in New England, and the army was dependent wholly upon supplies from abroad. Vessels disguised under English colors had been despatched to the coast of Africa to purchase powder from the British forts there, but they had not returned; and there was no visible means of getting a supply. Up to this time the Americans had no navy.

They had never thought of competing on the sea with us



formidable a power as that of England—the mistress of the ocean. Two letters of Marque, indeed, had been fitted out, one under the heroic Captain Manly, who, having captured an English provision ship and brought her safe into Salem won for himself a high reputation; for it was the first conquest over England upon the ocean. This success led to the arming of other private cruisers as well as an order from the Provincial Congress to build several thirty-two gun frigates.

But at the period of the re-possession of Boston by Washington's army, none of these frigates had been launched, and all the armed marine of the country consisted in four or five small cruisers to which letters of marque had been granted by Congress. These little vessels were generally fast sailers, and manned with very resolute men. As yet none of them had made any captures, save Manly's schooner. This was not, however, from want of zeal or courage, but from the difficulty of cutting off any of the English merchantmen or transports that were bound into Boston to Howe's army. They were daring enough, and often risked capture by the English frigates, through their boldness. They would secrete themselves in the small harbors along the coast, or in the mouth of the rivers, or behind some one of the numerous islands of Boston Bay, and from these positions dart upon the enemy, sometimes running him fairly into port, under the very guns of Shuldham's ships-of-war.

The departure of the one hundred and fifty British transports was a source of very particular gratification to the commanders of these cruisers. They foresaw that many English provision and powder ships would still make for the port, ignorant of the departure of the fleet and garrison; and these they resolved to make prizes. Admiral Shuldham, however, was too shrewd a man to leave such unsuspecting vessels to fall into the hands of the rebel cruisers, that, hawk-like, would be ready to pounce upon them. He therefore, left Commodore Barker, with a small force of one frigate and three sloops, to protect them, and warn them off the coast.

The American cruisers were not, however, to be intimidated by such precautions. Stretching boldly out to sea in the night, they run by daylight far eastward of the squadron and out of sight of it; and placing themselves in the track of vessels bound in lay in wait for them, John Bull believing he had the rogues blockaded in shore of him.

Five days after the sailing of the transports with Sir William Howe's forces, the citizens of Boston were surprised and alarmed one morning at dawn by firing of cannons in the direction of the harbor. On hastening to their roofs and look-outs they beheld a large English ship, the British ensign hoisted underneath the stars and stripes, coming in past the Castle a prize to a small schooner that was a cable's length in advance.

She proved to be a store-ship bound to Boston to supply the garrison. The cruiser had fallen in with her fifty miles at sea early the evening before and captured her; and though discovered by an English frigate four hours later and chased by her, she reached port in safety with her valuable prize. This event gave new impulse to public feeling. The stores on board the prize were very much needed, but there was no powder, the article most in requisition.

"If one hundred of those barrels had been filled with gunpowder, instead of flour," said General Washington, "it would have been more valuable than gold dust. The captain of the cruiser that should capture a powder ship, deserves a frigate."

This speech did not fall unheeded upon the ears of Neal Nelson, who was present and heard it. He had an hour before been insulted by Frederick Parks; and but for his love for Anne, he would have resented it at once. But this restrained him; and he had sought Washington to desire to be sent on some duty of danger and importance, that he might show the charge which Frederick rashly fastened upon him was false. Anne, young and beautiful, had more admirers than our hero. In the American army were several young men who admired her and sought her society. They were not long in discovering that Neal was the monopolizer of all her smiles. Jealousy was awakened, and envy roused. This led to an investigation of his claims and then whispered doubts as to the sincerity of his attachment to the American

cause. "Spy of Howe!" dropped from more than one young man's lips. The ears of Frederick were poisoned, and though at first he warmly took the part of his friend, he was finally led to doubt his good faith. He went to him, frankly told him the suspicions he entertained of him.

With the resolution that he would perform some act that would forever silence calumnies that he knew originated in jealousy, he sought the presence of the Commander-in-Chief. He waited until Washington was alone, and then said, firmly and respectfully:

"Sir, you have kindly placed confidence in me, and stationed me near your person, though I so lately formed a portion of the military household of the English general. Your favor towards me, and some other light causes, have drawn upon me the dislike of some of the young officers. I am accused of being a spy of Sir William Howe! Will you, sir, confide to me some duty of danger and necessity where by my conduct I may silence my calumniators?"

"What service would you like?" asked Washington, after questioning him more closely and in a friendly manner as to the difference between him and the other young officers.

"I am a sailor. I would like to cruise in search of a powder-ship, your excellency. There are two to be destined for this port. The cruiser that captured that English ship is about to sail to-morrow. The second officer in command is wounded, and the place is vacant. Your interest will obtain it for me."

"You shall have it," answered Washington very positively.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE REBEL CRUISER.

It was twilight of the day on which our hero had received the promise of General Washington that he would use his influence to get him appointed to the second station in the cruiser schooner, "The Rebel," which had brought the English store-ship as a prize. Washington had redeemed his pledge and sent him the commission.

As soon as he had received it, he first hastened to return him his grateful thanks for this mark of his confidence in him, and then flew to take a farewell of Anne; for that night, with the tide, the schooner was to sail.

It was twilight, and the lovers stood together in the door of the mansion.

"It is not necessary you should take this course, to maintain your honor," said Anne, sadly. "I have talked with my brother, and he is now ready to apologise to you. He is persuaded that he was misled; and he regrets deeply that he should have forgotten so soon all your kindness to him and uncle. He will soon be at home; and I entreat you will wait and be reconciled to him?"

"I would gladly be so. I have no animosity towards Frederick. I am glad he expresses confidence in me. But the whisper has gone abroad. It is on many lips. I must give evidence by my acts that I am no spy—but a true patriot, though a late one. I cannot delay. I have here the commission. The cruiser weighs in an hour, and I burn to do something to distinguish myself and to silence calumny."

"How happy I am that General Washington's faith in you remains firm. How noble in him to trust in you when such reports were flying abroad."

"Circumstances look strong against me. The fact that I am the nephew of General Howe, and have been his aid and an officer also in the King's service, these facts are sufficient to lead persons to believe such reports easily. None know, as you do, Annie, the peculiar motives which actuated me," he said, looking up and smiling. "None know the arguments by which I was converted. Men only see the external act. They look upon it, naturally, with suspicion."

"They readily believed I may be a spy! But I hope to prove that I am true to the cause I have embraced! I have certain knowledge that two powder-ships, containing, of course, other stores besides arms, are on their way from Portsmouth to Boston. It is for the protection of these ships when they



come on the coast that Admiral Shuldham has left the squadron under Commodore Bankes; for he well knew the value they would be to his foe, should they or one of them fall into his hands. Now, it is my hope to fall in with and capture one of these ships. No service that could be performed would be so highly estimated by Washington or the country as such a capture. When I heard Washington this morning so warmly express his wish that the prize had contained powder, I internally resolved that I would embark, even as a common seaman, in "The Rebel" and endeavor to be at least one of the party that should bring such a prize into port. But I hold the rank of second in command, and this will give me an opportunity of winning fame and name! for I am resolved that if I can have any influence with my voice, that the cruisers shall not return to port without one or the other of these ships."

In a few moments afterwards, while they were still lingering at their parting, the signal gun sounded from the port. Neal once more embraced the weeping girl and hastened to the pier. The last boat was just leaving it. He sprung on board and in five minutes stood upon the deck of the little vessel. There was just light enough for him to distinguish the captain, whom he recognized by his chapeau and sword, not having yet seen him.

"This is Captain Derby, I believe," said Neal, walking aft from the gangway.

"Yes, sir," answered a short, full-faced man, thirty-five years of age, with a keen look, and a very firm, but pleasing expression of countenance.

"Yes: is this Mr. Nelson?"

Neal replied in the affirmative.

"I am glad to see you on board, sir, as the tide will soon serve. I am prepared to find you a good officer. The general has spoken to me favorably of you."

Neal bowed, and then said, "I will, if you please, assume my duties."

"Yes, take the deck, while I go below to finish a letter I have to send on shore," and he handed him the trumpet.

Neal, prepossessed in favor of his captain, began to take upon himself the command of the deck, by giving two or three necessary orders in a tone that at once showed the men they had a seaman to command them who must be obeyed.

At eight o'clock the schooner loosed her foretopsail and jib, and, tripping her anchor, was, in five minutes afterwards, bowling down the harbor at the rate of seven knots.

The night was starry, with drifting clouds; the wind steady from N.N.W. The schooner was about 100 tons burthen, a very fast sailer, with unusual breadth of beam. She carried eight twelve and one twenty-four on a carriage, upon a sort of top-gallant fore-castle, which seemed to have been constructed on purpose to sustain the gun at this elevation. The crew consisted of sixty men.

All these facts Neal learned before they had passed the Castle. Up to this time, Captain Derby had taken no active part in the command, although he had been on deck since the anchor was weighed. He seemed to leave all to his new officer, that he might test his qualities as an officer and as a seaman.

After they passed Nix Mate and left the Light house a mile or two astern, Captain Derby approached Neal as he stood near the helmsman conning the sailing of the vessel.

"Well, Nelson, I am very well satisfied with General Washington's appointment! I see you understand your business. I don't want a better officer if you turn out to be as good as you've begun."

"I am gratified at your approval, sir," answered Neal.

"Now, we are in blue water we have got to keep a sharp look out. Bankes is cruising in our present neighborhood, and can't be far off at this moment; for he was in the offing at sunset, with the frigate that chased me in, and a sloop. We must take in all the sail we can spare so as not to be conspicuous if they sweep the sea with their night glasses: at the same time we must carry enough to get off the coast before daylight and far outside of him."

"Have you any particular object in view this cruise, sir?"

"Particular! Yes, very particular. I mean to capture the first British vessel that will strike to me."

"I mean is there any vessel in particular that you are desirous of capturing?"

"No! I shall watch for any that are bound this way."

"Would you not like to fall in with a ship laden with powder, Captain Derby?"

"I would rather make such a capture than capture a frigate if she had no powder on board!"

"You perhaps, know that though I am now in the Provincial service, I was recently in the British!"

"Yes, the general told me part of your story; but old Colonel Parks sent for me and gave me a full account of you!"

"Then I have only to add that I learned while I was in the king's service that two ships laden with powder and munitions of war were to sail from Bristol or Portsmouth the last of February! It is now the twenty-eighth of March!"

"Do you mean to say that the ships were destined for Boston?"

"Yes, to supply Sir William Howe's army! It is more particularly to watch for the approach of these two ships that Commodore Bankes has been left to cruise off the port."

"This is brave news! Last of last month they were to sail! They have been to sea now thirty days or so! Excellent news! Now if I could fall in with one of these powder-monkeys I would tie his tail to my taffrail and tow him into Boston!"

"It is with the prospect of your being able to make a capture of one of these vessels I have shipped with you; for I would share in the credit of the enterprise!"

"I would never ask another earthly favor if I might come athwart one of these gentlemen!" said Captain Derby, with animation walking up and down the deck and rubbing his hands. "Boys!" he suddenly cried out to his men! "there are two powder-ships making for Boston, thirty days out. We will have them if we have to fight Bankes's squadron. Hey, boys?"

"Aye, aye, sir!" was the general response in a hearty tone.

"Keep a good look out there, boys! Open your eyes there in the fore-topmast head! You have got to see double and look out for prizes as well as John Bull's frigates! Have the men all ready at their guns, Mr. Nelson! These store ships show fight sometimes and have to be whipped! The prize we took yesterday gave us nine round shot besides a sprinkling of musketry, Harry Cowell, my second, and three men got hit! We must be prepared for the rogues!"

The vessel ploughed her way along over the undulating billows, under shortened sail to present as little surface to the eyes of the enemy as possible, and not making full six knots. Her course was E. S. East, wing and wing, the wind being dead aft. At least a dozen men were engaged in looking out from the deck and aloft, some directing their eyes abeam, and others astern; for Captain Derby knew that ships which had kept no look out over the course they had crossed, had some times found themselves over-hauled by the enemy coming up under their stern.

It was about five minutes after seven bells had struck in the middle watch, when Neal, who pacing the deck, suddenly stopped. He had been walking and thinking upon Anne and anticipating the time when, if fortune favored him, he should return with honor and silence forever all doubts of the sincerity of allegiance to the patriot cause. At intervals, mindful of his duty, he had sent his keen glance ahead and around him; and at the moment he stopped, his eye was arrested by a star rising, but which he believed at first to be the light of a vessel it was visible so low upon the horizon. Taking his glass he examined it and was satisfied that it was the star Aldebaran. He put down his glass and remained watching its slow altitude, when he saw it all at once disappear and the next instant reappear as if an opaque object had passed between it and his line of sight. The idea that it was a vessel flashed upon his mind; and again seizing his glass, he levelled it in the direction, and was satisfied that there was a ship ahead about three points off the starboard bow and standing close hauled, but on what tack he was unable to determine, the whole mass was so indistinct. Captain Derby



was lying asleep upon the deck with his jacket under his head for a pillow; for he was too anxious to go below: Neal awoke him and directed his attention to the sail.

"It is a large ship, and I think standing upon the larboard tack, S. by E. She is one of Banke's frigates. Give the word quietly, Mr. Nelson, to haul aft the fore and main sheets, and let us steer a point or two higher, till we can better make her out. Drop both the peaks, and take a double reef in the fore-sail and mainsail, so that we can lay as low in the water as possible. All our top canvas is furled as it should be in such a dangerous neighborhood."

These orders were conveyed to the men by Nelson in an under tone, for the wind blew directly towards the stranger, and it was important that no sound should be borne to them; for, at sea, the slightest noise is heard at an inconceivable distance.

"We can run down close under her counter, with the low sail we carry," said Neal, "and can see what she looks like. We shall not be discovered if we let go our halyards as we come close to her."

"You are both bold and wise, I see, Mr. Nelson. I love a brave man! Take the command, as it is your watch, and manage her as you will! I will play passenger and look on! It is my opinion it is the frigate."

"No, sir," responded Neal, who had the glass at his eye; "she is too small for a frigate! It is one of the sloops or a large merchantman."

"Then it is one of the store-ships."

"I sincerely hope so. We shall, however, soon know, as we are now not more than a mile from her."

The schooner, with not a yard of canvas hoisted twenty feet above the decks, lying low and crouching upon the water like a hound upon its haunches, moved steadily and silently down towards the dark tower of canvas that lay between her and the sky. As they came nearer, it was plain that the ship was beating westward on the larboard tack, with top-gallant-sails set, and royal-yard across.

"Whether she is an armed vessel or not, she be hanged if I can make out," said Captain Derby. "But she looks to me like a merchant ship! Hark, there is eight bells! Now listen."

The loud, prolonged call of the "larboard watch, ahoy!" reached their ears.

"That settles it, sir," said Neal with animation.

"Yes, I think it does," said the Captain. "A man-of-war never calls a watch in that style."

"No. She is a trader."

"I hope she is a store-ship, filled with powder."

"That remains to be seen! But look to the leeward of her! There is another ship looming up against the sky like a cloud! We are in ticklish company! It can't be that they are both the powder-ships."

"I think the one the other side of her must be one of Banke's frigates," said Neal, levelling his glass at the newcomer. "Hark! there's a boatswain's whistle! See! a line-stock is flashing on her decks! Let go halyards there, that the flash of the gun, if they fire, shall not expose us! Easy—without noise!"

Hardly had the sails descended to the deck ere a bright flash illumined the sea. By it, the ship first discovered was plainly seen to be a large store-ship, painted black, with white bands. It also displayed the vessel from which it came. She was plainly made out to be a frigate of the first class. A loud report resounded across the water, and died away in the distance.

"That gun is for the ship to heave-to, not for us," said Neal. "Hark! hear the yards swing round! She is laying her maintopsail aback! Listen! they hail her from the frigate's deck."

"Ship, ahoy! what ship is that?"

"The George the Third—store-ship! bound to Boston."

"Aye, aye! Glad to fall in with you! Have spoken your consort six hours ago, and ordered her to put away for Halifax. The garrison is withdrawn from Boston, and the Yankees are in possession again. Happy to fall in with you, Captain. Fill away and lay your course for Hali—!"

"Aye, aye, sir. What frigate is that?"

"His Britannic majesty's frigate the Sphynx."

"Thank you, sir, for your warning!"

"Keep in my wake till daylight, and I will protect you till you get a hundred miles or so Eastward. There are some infernal rebel cruisers abroad, and they are in want of powder. So you must keep a sharp look out."

"Aye, aye, sir. But we are a heavy sailer and may fall astern."

"Fill away with me and steer E. N. East, and if you lose sight of me you will be sure I am ahead. If I lose sight of you for any length of time I will lay by and wait till you come up."

"Thank you, sir."

The order "brace round the yards," then reached the ears of Neal and Captain Derby from the powder-ship, and the frigate putting up her helm took the lead, followed by the other.

"Now, if I do not hang upon your track like a blood-hound," said Neal within himself, "I hope never to see Anne. Captain Derby, that ship must be our prize before another hour."

"Impossible."

"It is possible, sir."

"She is under the protection of the frigate."

"Therefore can we take her easier. She will feel the more secure."

"How can it be effected?"

"It is plain, though we have been within hail, we have not been discovered. That frigate therefore cannot see us a mile distant, is very plain. This store-ship is a bad sailer, so says her captain. She is now a third of a mile at the start astern of her convoy, and in half an hour will be likely to double this space. My plan is, sir, to follow close in her wake, and when I get near enough, hail her, and demand to know if she is the store-ship "George III." On receiving a reply, we will inform them of the evacuation of Boston, and warn them not to proceed, passing ourselves off as one of Banke's cruisers. Our gratuitous information will gain their confidence, and I will gradually fall alongside. If you will have the boarders ready to leap away at the word, in three minutes she will be in our hands. All we shall then have to do, will be to stick her head on the other tack, and beat back to windward. It will be some time, perhaps an hour or two, before the frigate will miss her altogether and put back to look her up. By that time we shall have so far got the weather gage as to laugh at the Commodore should he be in sight at daybreak."

"Mr. Nelson," said Captain Derby grasping his hand, "you have my hearty concurrence in this plan. It is well conceived. It does you honor. You shall have the credit of carrying it out."

The schooner was the next moment under press of sail steering in the wake of the store-ship, which was now distant about half a mile ahead.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE POWDER-SHIP.

THE attempt about to be made for cutting off the powder-ship from the protection of the frigate, was one of singular boldness and temerity. But our hero was well fitted for an enterprize like this. Brave and skilful, and as cool as he was courageous, he knew no difficulties where he resolved to succeed. Captain Derby was scarcely less daring in spirit and action himself; and his crew were full of animation and zeal. The most perfect silence, consistent with the working of the vessel, prevailed on board; and all were in eager expectation. Groups of men crowded the fore-castle, intently watching the two vessels ahead, but also the dark cloud-like outline of the frigate in the distance beyond her. The schooner's sheets were drawn aft nearly sharp, though the wind was several points free, in order to present as narrow a surface as possible to the eyes of those on the deck of the enemy while their



broad yards presented a large object to the vision of their pursuers.

"How does she go?" asked Captain Derby, as Neal laid down the thirty-second glass, after ordering the reel to be held.

"Five and a half."

"That is fair. We plainly gain upon them."

"Yes; after we get a cable's length nigher they will of course discover us; and then we had better make sail and run boldly up alongside and hail: for if they see us lagging behind they will take the alarm and perhaps fire a gun to attract the attention of the frigate!"

"You are right, Mr. Nelson! Steady as you are, helmsman!"

"Steady, sir!" answered the man in the low, gruff tone, peculiar to men when at the helm.

"She looms up bravely! There is a light moving on board!" said Captain Derby. "Stand up at your guns, men, for we must be ready for any emergency."

"Let every man have his boarding pike and cutlass ready to his grasp," said Neal a few moments afterwards. "Be silent in treading about the decks. Be ready to board when you shall see me spring into the hammock nettings and call boarders away! But let there be no pistols fired or taken; for this ship must be carried with as little noise as possible! We must get possession of her before she can have time to fire a gun or give any alarm."

The schooner stood on about five minutes longer, when Neal, for Captain Derby had given the whole conduct of the enterprise to him as its originator, gave an order to ease off the fore and the main sheets and keep away a couple of points. The long boom moved out broadly over the bulwarks and the little vessel freed from her temporary restraint swept dashing forward boldly in a direction and at a rate that in ten minutes brought her within hail under the lee-counter of the ship. She was already discovered by the sound of commotion which the wind bore to their ears; but Neal without giving them time to speculate upon his character or to hail him first seized his trumpet, and waiting until the schooner came so near that his voice could not be heard by the frigate, he hailed in true man-of-war style,

"What ship is that?"

"The George III. store-ship bound to Boston? What schooner is that?"

"His Britannic majesty's cruiser, Bull Dog."

"From your course I suppose you are bound into Halifax, and have heard of the evacuation of Boston?"

"Yes."

"What ship is that ahead?"

"His Majesty's frigate the Sphynx!"

"So I supposed! There are several of the fleet cruising about here to warn vessels off! Helmsman, luff a point! Come up directly abeam so as to run the end of the jib-boom into her fore-rigging. Stand by in the quarter boat with the grappnels and be ready to cast them into her mizzen-chains at the word! (These orders were spoken by Neal in an undertone.) You are under convoy of the frigate, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"Very well, then I will not keep company with you! Good night and a pleasant passage."

"Thank you, sir, good night!"

The two vessels were standing on their course all the while, the ship under top gallant sails, her courses brailed up, the schooner under her fore and main sail and her jib and fore top-sail. They were moving at about the rate of seven to five so that the schooner was each instant overlapping the ship's quarter with her bows. The space between the vessel's abeam was about one hundred feet.

"I will pass ahead of you and speak the frigate," said Neal.

"You seem to be a light sailer, and could make a circle round me if you chose," answered the English Captain.

"Have you any late London papers?"

"Yes; I will throw you one, if you will luff a little closer."

Neal heard the captain give an order to his steward to go into the cabin to bring the newspapers.

"Now stand by, boarders, and! Captain Derby you may head the party bows or astern! I do not wish to rob you of any honor in this affair!"

"I am too fat to do service leading boarders! I will remain and look after the schooner, for you may have to retreat aboard again!"

"Not while I have a life to lose! Helmsman, now is your time to shoot the jib-boom in her fore-rigging!"

"Tell your men to keep away a little, sir, you will be afool of us!" cried the English Captain, with quick apprehension.

Before he had done speaking, the jib-boom of the schooner showed itself between the rattlins of the fore-rigging, and the same instant the stern swung toward the ship's quarter!

"Cast your grappnels!" cried Neal. "Now, boarders, away! Captain!" he cried to the English commander, "I will come on board in person and take your papers."

The next instant he was upon the deck of the ship with thirty men at his back. The struggle was short. Taken by surprise the English Captain made but little resistance, and fled to his cabin. Two British Colonels and three or four young military officers, who were passengers going over to join Howe's army, made a courageous defence, and were finally only secured after they had killed three of the boarders and wounded Neal in the sword-arm. As they had not anticipated a surprise there was fortunately no pistols on deck, and none were discharged in the melee. The crew of the ship, driven to the fore-castle, made no resistance, but surrendered at discretion. In four minutes after Neal had boarded, the ship was in his possession, and the captain and eighteen seamen, besides the military officers, prisoners.

So complete had been the surprise, and so successful the capture, that the vessel continued on her course, Neal having the first thing sent a man to take the helm which the English sailor had deserted. The ship proved to be armed with four twelve pounders; but they were unloaded; and although a circle of boarding pikes surrounded the main-mast, not one of them had been removed from the becketts.

"I regret, my dear sir, I should have to take you into Boston after all," said Neal to the discomfited British Captain; "but as that is the port for which you sailed, it will not be any infringement upon your ship's papers!"

"I would like to know if you are a Yankee cruiser?" asked the Captain, whom Neal had invited on deck.

"Yes. This is the American schooner Rebel, Captain Derby, along side; and we left Boston not many hours since on purpose to capture you or the "William and Mary." But as she has been warned and is making the best of her way to Halifax, I must be content with George III. How much powder have you on board?"

"You will find out before you get into port. I will blow you sky-high if I can get a match."

"You are very kind to inform me of your intentions! I will have you put in irons. A guard is already placed over the magazine's hold! So don't think of doing anything so rash, dear captain! It is very natural that you should fume and swear a little, for it must be provoking to be captured right under the stern of a frigate!"

"None but a madman would have attempted it. The frigate is not three quarters of a mile off. I wish I had a pistol or musket for a moment to fire and let 'em know what a fix we are in. You keep standing on; do you mean to take the frigate too?"

"Not quite, I stand on to lull any suspicions that any noise, if heard, might have roused. If they heard our boarding you, and seeing the ship sailing steadily in her wake, she will not stop to inquire what was the matter; but if I had instantly put about, as I mean to do in a few moments, she would be putting back to look after us."

"You are confoundly shrewd. So I suppose if the frigate don't happen to look back, I shall have to go into Boston?"

"Yes. The Americans are in great want of gunpowder; and this supply you have brought over is very seasonable. No doubt the city of Boston will present you with a vote of thanks."



"You are very merry, young gentleman."

"Captain Derby" said Neal, looking over the side, "now you have cast off the schooner, perhaps you had best drop astern, and lay your course to windward. As the frigate may see you when you quit the ship's side, you had best stand away in such a line that the prize will cover you till you get out of sight. I shall gradually shorten sail and fall astern till I lose sight of the frigate, and then follow you."

Captain Derby followed successfully the suggestions of his young officer, and dropping astern, leaving thirty of the cruiser's crew in the prize with Neal, he was in ten minutes invisible in the gloom of the midnight sea.

The frigate was now about a mile ahead standing on her course totally unsuspecting of events that had transpired on board the powder-ship in convoy. Neal had thought he could safely drop astern, and gave orders to furl the main and mizzen top-gallant sails. Soon afterwards he brailled up the mizzen and main topsail, leaving the head-sails standing as they were so as to deceive the frigate and give the appearance of being under full sail.

"Is there no way in which we can give the frigate intimation of our situation?" asked one of the British colonels of the Captain in an under tone.

"None unless by discharging fire arms. The report of a pistol would attract her attention and bring her to! But we are so closely guarded by the Yankee, there is no access to such a weapon. We must take it philosophically, trusting that the frigate will miss us and put back after us; for you see we are falling astern fast under our short sail, and in ten minutes we shall have lost sight of her!"

"This capture is characteristic of all that I have heard of those rebellious Yankees. They are bold, daring devils, and attempt to achieve enterprizes no other people would think of. Who would have thought of or dared to board a ship within less than a mile of a frigate, when the firing of a single pistol would have betrayed them, and brought the frigate down upon them."

"Not exactly down upon them, Colonel," responded the Captain; "for the frigate is ahead of us, and of course to leeward. She would have to beat up to us, and it would have been a long chase. This the Yankee knows and calculated upon. The fact is, we are fairly outwitted, and must content ourselves with going into Boston prisoners. You can scarcely make her out. She gradually fades away in the darkness and distance, and now she is fairly out of sight."

"Ready about!" cried Neal, in a quick exulting tone.

"You see that the young fellow knows what he is about!" continued the Captain. "He will have it all his own way now. The frigate keeps on as ignorant of our being in the hands of the enemy as a Port Admiral parading Portsmouth Pier that his flashy pocket handkerchief has been picked out of his pocket."

The order given by the young seaman was obeyed by his crew, with alacrity. They had discovered before Neal had been an hour in the schooner, that they had a second officer who knew his business; and his success had now bound them to him with a devotion nothing could destroy. He had not merely shown himself a seaman, but a brave man, who could handle a cutlass as well as a trumpet. He had conquered for them a ship of inestimable value, enriching with her wealth each man of them all. They sprung to their posts with a glad cry as they heard the order to put about, and with a hearty heave-ho-yeo, that even the vicinity of the frigate could not check, they swung the yards around and brought the ship braced sharp up on the larboard tack.

"Lay aloft, and make sail," cried Neal, as the ship met her helm and lay snugly to the wind.

The mizzen and main topmast were loosed and the top-gallant sails set again and the ship began to toss the sea from under her bows, leaving the frigate rapidly in the distance.

"Keep a good look-out forward there, and aloft, for we are not yet safe in port," cried Neal to his men. "There is another frigate and three eighteen gun sloops yet cruising about us. We are, besides, twenty leagues east of our port, with a dead wind in our teeth."

The prize proved, indeed, a very heavy sailer. With a breeze that eight knots could have been freely got out of the schooner, but five and a half could be made by the ship.

After standing on about an hour, a sail was discovered ahead. Neal had his men called to quarters, and stood on till he was satisfied that it was the schooner on the opposite tack. They hailed as they passed, and, Captain Derby saying he would keep in company, fell astern, and followed in her wake, under shortened sail!

In less than twenty minutes afterwards, the cry, "sail no!" was again heard from aloft. Neal sprang forward, and saw that a large ship was very near crossing his fore-foot. He knew that if she was a frigate he could not escape her, so resolved to put the best face on the matter, luffed to give her room to pass.

"What ship is that?" came hoarsely from the deck of the stranger, which he now saw plainly was a sloop-of-war.

"The George III. store ship, bound for Boston!" answered Neal.

"Then tack ship and lay your course for Halifax. The port of Boston has been deserted by his Majesty's fleet and garrison, and is in Washington's hands. Lay your course for the port of Halifax."

"Aye, aye, sir! Many thanks for your kindness."

"What schooner is that in company?"

"A Newfoundland fishing schooner we have just spoken."

The ships parted. The sloop-of-war was soon lost in the darkness, and the prize kept boldly on her way crowding all sail to get as far to windward as possible.

The daylight dawned upon the prize ship and cruiser within sight of Cape Cod, the Sphinx frigate hull down to the East, her topsails just dipping, and evidently in pursuit of the store ship. The prize, however, safely reached port about four o'clock in the afternoon, and with "The Rebel" in company, saluted the town with thirteen guns and anchored off the end of Long Wharf, abreast of the other prize.

The joy this capture produced throughout the army, the town, and all New England, cannot be conceived of at this period of time. The prize contained eleven hundred casks of powder, besides cast shot, lead, muskets, swords, pistols, and provisions to a large amount. Captain Derby generously waived all the credit of the capture, and Neal received the public congratulations, not only of Washington and the selectmen of the town, but a vote of thanks from Congress. The command of the first frigate that should be ready for sea was conferred upon him. He silenced completely the calumnies that had been circulated against him; and even his enemies were constrained to do him reverence. The joy of Anne can be better imagined than described. Col. Parks embraced his young friend with fatherly pride and affection, and said it would be the happiest day of his life when he should see him united to Anne. Frederick cordially acknowledged the injustice he had done him, and the two friends reconciled, were in a few days more closely bound to each other as brothers, for Anne and Neal were united on the fourth of July, ten weeks after the departure of the English garrison, at the altar of Christ's Church, Salem street. Washington, giving away the bride.

Thus we terminate our story; which we have written mainly to illustrate the important historical events connected with the siege and evacuation of Boston; knowing, that history reflected from the mirror of romance, sometimes catches with its lustre the youthful eye, which otherwise would but faintly be impressed by its sober presence; and in making use of history, to further our purpose, we have in no instance deviated from its integrity.

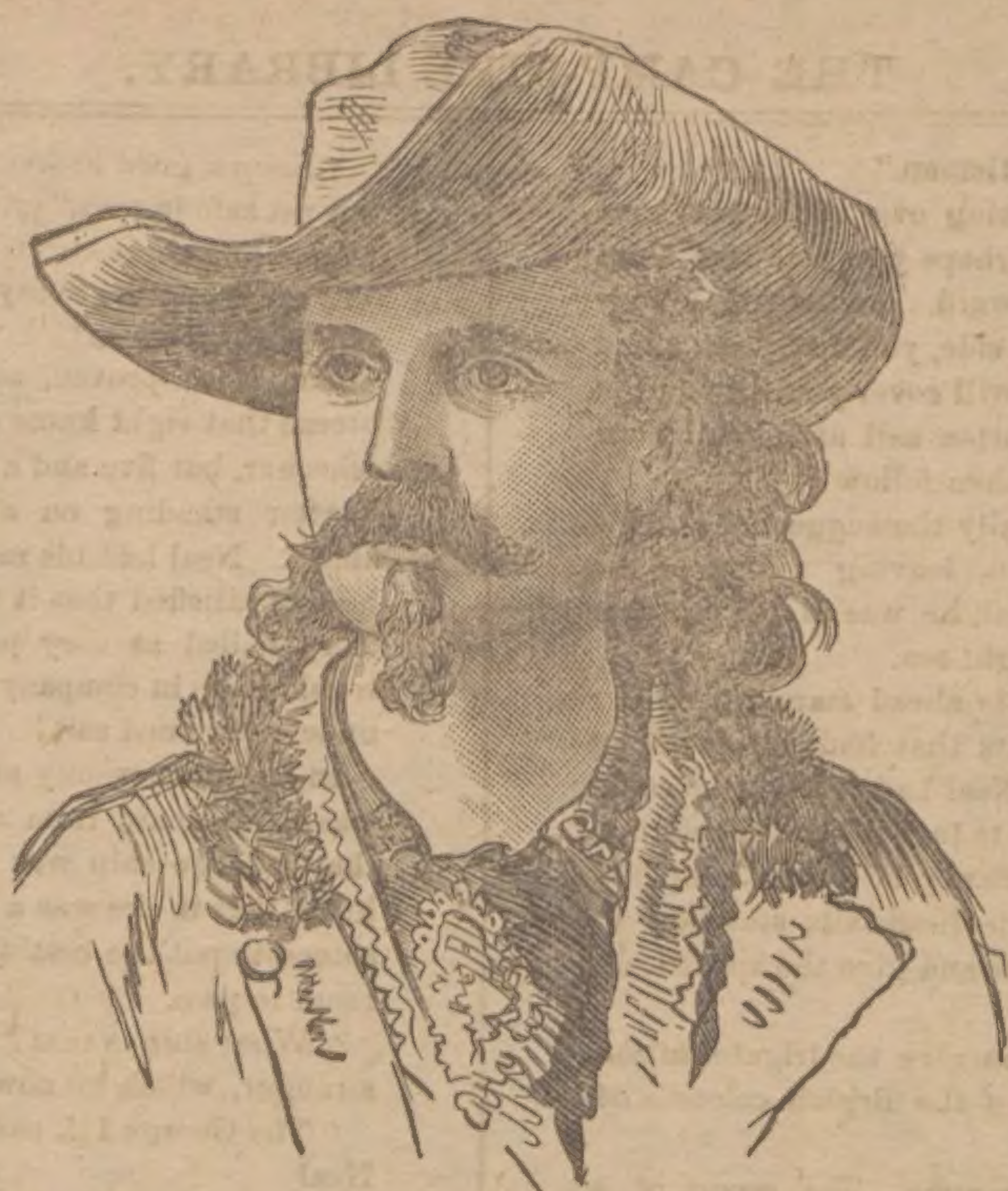
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